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The Christian parent

By
Rev. A.B.Muzzey...

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W.Crosby and H.P.Nichols,
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The Christian parent

PREFACE.

THE present volume has been prepared from a deep sense of the importance of its subject, and in the belief that no work of the kind is now before the public. The writer has encountered difficulties, which have doubtless kept back others, and which, had they been all foreseen, might have deterred him from the undertaking.

In the first place, it is not easy to find the proper limits of so vast a field as that of parental education. We might well entitle a complete work on this subject, "A World-Discourse," or "A Universal Guide." For all topics are pertinent to it which relate either to the powers of our nature or to the history of their development. The whole theory of mental, moral, and spiritual influences is involved at every stage of the treatise. The entire circuit of experimental and practical life should be taken in the course it pursues. It should em-

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brace comprehensive principles, and these must be carried out and illustrated with minuteness.

The book, being intended for all classes of parents, the educated no less than the illiterate, ought to contain broad views, expressed with a pure taste; but, at the same time, all subtilties must be avoided, the thoughts must be obvious, the style plain, and the illustrations familiar. Much may be well left to be supplied by the imaginative reader, and yet for the unlearned everything should be fully written out.

Amid these and other complex difficulties, all I have dared to anticipate is moderate success. If for any reason the attempt shall prove a failure, it is hoped the obstacles which stood in the way of the writer will serve to mitigate any strictures to which he might otherwise be reasonably subject.

The title of this volume is "An Aid to Parents." In whatever other respects it has failed, I trust none will have cause to say it is untrue to its title. I have earnestly desired to do something to impress parents with a sense of their duties to their children as Christians. The claims of literature, patriotism, science, and art, and of the manifold industrial pursuits, on the attention of the young, should never be forgotten by the parent. But to have taken up

these topics would have extended this work to an inordinate length. I have, therefore, confined myself, for the most part, to the single point of moral and religious education. If anything has been done to enlighten and to quicken parents in this regard, my main object is accomplished.

The work has grown constantly in my hands, and the reader will notice occasional repetitions of the same thought in various chapters. The different connections in which they occur will, it is hoped, excuse them in part. Perhaps "line upon line" was indispensable to fix the great principles of the writer in the mind.

Many parents will probably be disheartened by the great requisitions which this volume makes upon them. Let such consider, however, what a work they perform if they are but faithful parents. We may fail in our aspirations for wealth, honor, and power, but if we do our duty to our children, all other losses and disappointments are made up to us. To bring up a family well is an object sufficient to compensate for any labor and anxieties, and to gratify any reasonable ambition. We see the mother become pale, while her daughters are full of bloom, and the father emaciated in proportion as the sons grow in stature and vigor.

But let them not regret the change; true, they must part with the energy of former days, but it is absorbed by those in whom and for whom they now live. Let every parent, then, say, with a pious content, I must decrease, but these shall increase.

The position of our parents in this age is such, all thoughtful observers must perceive, as to call for the utterance of a clear and loud voice on the parental duties. Authority has nearly passed away from the fireside, and influence and moral suasion have as yet but imperfectly supplied its place. In this state of things, the conscientious parent is troubled, and is looking anxiously for light on the means and methods of fulfilling his task. If a single ray shall be thrown on his path by the perusal of this volume, the prayer of the writer will be answered, and his labor not unrewarded.

CAMBRIDGE, *December* 1, 1849.

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THE FIRESIDE.

CHAPTER I.

HOME. — ITS ASSOCIATIONS. — ITS INFLUENCES.

HOME, — what associations cluster around that brief word! Whether we contemplate the origin, the peculiar nature, or the duration of its bonds, how delightful is the theme! It was there our unsoiled spirits first waked to a vital consciousness. It was there a mother's love once watched our slightest movement and our every wish, and a father's care and counsels were early and ever around us. There, too, it was, that from cradled helplessness we advanced through childhood's happy hours and youth's unclouded hopes. And when the sad day came to try our hearts with unknown scenes and anxious toils, it was home, its honored forms, its fraternal ties, its dear remembrances, from which, "with lingering steps and slow, we took our way."

But more than this, it is there Christianity erects her throne. The Saviour of the world, as he hung upon the cross, amid bodily agonies and mental

pangs, with a sublime forgetfulness of himself, thought of his mother's wants, and in words brief — for his sufferings permitted him no lengthened speech — he committed that mother to the care of his beloved disciple. Henceforth the tender tie to her, severed by his own departure, is to be renewed between these two individuals. In the act itself, and in the selection for this office of the affectionate John, Jesus exhibited, what he has been singularly charged with lacking, the strongest regard for the domestic relations. He taught the great lesson, that they who would be his true disciples must "be careful to show piety at home." His whole life, indeed, by its tender and holy affections, its meek and quiet virtues, the love he bore to Martha, Mary, and Lazarus, the raising of the widow's son, and by how many other similar incidents, manifests a constant respect for the fireside virtues. It has been remarked, that "Jesus began every great section of his life with some domestic scene." His advent occurred amid the genial influences of home. The gentle Joseph and Mary, a father and a mother, brethren and sisters, all were there. His first miracle was blessed by his mother's presence; and Bethany, and Nain, and how many other hallowed spots, bore witness to the home-born, humanizing nature of his religion.

For many reasons, it will be found we can hardly attach too great importance to our home.

Consider, first, that it is a Divine institution; its

relations were established by God himself. It was he who pronounced it not good for man to be alone, and gave him a companion, and ordained through these two all the families of the earth. The world is filled with other institutions, embracing the interests of religion, of government, of society, and of country. But these are nearly all human institutions ; few, if any of them, can be said to have been positively and directly established from above. They differ in this respect entirely from our domestic relations, and they are so far of secondary importance.

Then, too, the ties of home are universal. God evidently intended that they should be respected by, and formed between, all his children. Many of them are altogether involuntary, and the others, wherever the race have been civilized, are voluntarily established. Think of the millions of homes embraced in this single country. What a multitude of protecting roofs invite the weary, as each nightfall returns, to gather beneath them for repose ! How many doors are opened with the breath of every morning, to send forth a tide of living souls, that swells and sweeps onward, each passing year, with a rapidity we can scarcely measure ! What influences are here ! What a sway, for the weal or woe of individuals and of the nation, must these domestic ties every day and every hour exert !

Yet more, the relations of home are permanent. All others on earth do, or may, change ; we can form

and we can dissolve the partnerships of gain, of honor, of pleasure, and to some extent we can modify our friendships. But the bonds of the fireside are, for the most part, indissoluble. So long as we live, so long do we continue husbands and wives, fathers and mothers, sons and daughters, brethren and sisters. Days may come of temporary alienation and coldness. Some, indeed, may never join us in the happy family meeting; but the bond still holds between these and ourselves, as between us who do meet. Be our lot one of affluence or of need, rise we to distinction or sink we to obscurity, nay, what is far more affecting, possess we such virtues and graces as to command the respect and win the love of all around us, and excite a just pride in our characters, or yield we to temptation, and bring we on ourselves a name that shall pierce like an arrow our tenderest relative, the bond still holds between us. Together we are to divide Heaven's bright gifts, and to taste each bitter cup our Father may send us; and together, with inextinguishable sympathies, "if one member suffer, shall all the members suffer with it, and if one member be honored, all the members rejoice with it." Though lands separate, or oceans roll between us, and we never more look on the face of each other, the same bond still unites us. How momentous is the unchangeableness of these ties! What an interest and what importance does it give to them!

Nor is it the permanence alone of our domestic

relations which clothes them with consequence. They exert, in their legitimate tendency, a deep moral and spiritual influence. A Christian home tends to preserve and to increase the purity of all its inmates ; they act and react upon each other for good. Those who constitute the united head of a family are intrusted not only with the happiness, but the character, of each other. They cannot be faithful to their position, without becoming mutual helpers in the great work of personal virtue. Let either have a high moral standard, and rise steadily toward it, the other also will advance in the same direction. Who has not seen the power, the almost divine power, of goodness illustrated in some family where the "believing wife sanctified the unbelieving husband" ? Here are two individuals, who stand pledged, through all the changing periods and circumstances of life, to love, honor, and aid one another. What tenderness and confidence, what watchfulness and self-sacrifice, are involved in that pledge ! Can there be a more perfect seminary than this for moral and spiritual culture ? If the vow be paid, if these two hearts do thus beat in unison, then will they surely attain the fulness of the Gospel stature. Here, within this consecrated bond, will Christian charity, a spirit of unaffected kindness, that precious disposition which knows not envy, resentment, pride, nor any malign quality whatever, be gained and matured. In this, the only connection of its kind upon earth,

does man most directly learn that only true greatness, to live out of himself, to forget in a measure his own contracted indulgences in rejoicing with another, — to control each selfish grief, and to enlarge each disinterested feeling. And here, as with the revolving years come the changes of life, — as trouble, sickness, bereavement, and sorrows, wave after wave, break on these hearts, — there is awakened a growing spirit of submission to Providence, and of prayer, and of a holy, ever-deepening trust.

There are no agencies on earth so powerful for the preservation and growth of our moral energies as those of home. And when we have gone astray in the world, we cannot return to our fireside without hearing voices that call us to repent. Where is it that the wanderer usually feels first a disposition to break off his vices ? Can the erring father reflect on his example, and look on his sons, and still continue in iniquity ? There is an eloquence in the tones of a gentle wife which must penetrate the heart of her fallen husband. There is a power in the very countenance of a good mother which must melt that son who comes home reeling from the haunts of dissipation, from the abode of licentiousness, or from the gaming-table and the cup.

The fireside is the natural nursery of liberal souls, and of an enlarged, active excellence. They who cherish that spirit of disinterestedness to which its relations constantly incite them will find their moral

sympathies extending more and more, and their disposition to social usefulness daily strengthened. Where are we to look for the genuine patriot, or the sincere philanthropist, except among those true to the calls and claims of home? He that is faithful in that which is least is most likely to be faithful in the greatest of his duties. Name to me a family among whose members the law of kindness prevails, where husband and wife have no strifes but in generosities to each other, and where the brothers and sisters are emulous to render services to one another, and the children leap to wait round the father and mother, and I will go there with confidence for Sunday-school teachers, for almoners to the poor, and for young missionaries of the cross.

Yes, there is a direct spiritual influence going forth from a pure fireside. There may be exceptions, yet scarcely can one be entirely faithful at home and yet uninterested in the great theme of religion. Point me to a true mother; that mother is constrained to teach her child that he has a Father in heaven. Did she refuse this office, we should look that the very beams from the walls would cry out on her sin. The first prayer we learned was caught from our mother's lips. Blessings on her memory! for, if we love God now, it was perhaps that very prayer which first raised our hearts toward him. And if there be one of our childhood's circle now immersed in guilt, the dew of heaven in those infant prayers may yet fall on

his sin-scorched spirit and save him. How often would the penitent one fain seek out a dear mother's dust, and pour out his swelling sorrows in the fervent strain, —

"O, come, whilst here I press
My brow upon thy grave, — and in those mild
And thrilling tones of tenderness,
Bless, bless thy child!

"Yes, bless thy weeping child,
And o'er thy urn, — Religion's holiest shrine, —
O, give its spirit undefiled
To blend with thine!"

Home derives its chief importance from the decisive influence exerted on the child by the parent. Both father and mother leave their impress more or less distinct on the character of their offspring. But of these, that of the latter is always deepest and most permanent. It has been observed of our Saviour, that "we hear nothing of his reputed father after his childhood, while his mother is prominently put forward." This is a significant fact; it is true to human nature in all ages; for, however dear may be the father, or however important his services, the love of the mother is usually the stronger, and her assiduities the more unwearied. "Her influence," it has been beautifully said, "like some concentrated perfume, penetrates with potent but invisible agency every nook of home, pervading where the coarser authority of the father could never reach; it begins

with the first breath we draw, with the first light we see. On her were fixed our first affections, from her we received the first food, on her lap spoke the first word, and thought the first thought. Under her rule it was that we enjoyed what now appears to have been the only period of unalloyed happiness, and from underneath her warm and sheltering wing were taken to the first taste of anxiety and toil, and transferred to the comparatively stern control of the father. The father may instruct, but the mother instils; the father may command our reason, but the mother compels our instinct; the father may finish, but the mother must begin. The empire of the father is over the head; of the mother, over the heart. Supposing the degree of piety the same, the woman always exhibits it in a more engaging view than the man. It seems in her more innate and less earthly; some of the sweetest Gospel graces are hers almost by inheritance. Angelic meekness, faithful affection, enduring patience, uncomplaining resignation, having free play by her retirement from the passion-stirring and tumultuous scenes of life, grow up in her to most enviable ripeness."

Who, then, can over-estimate a mother's influence? For what high offices is she qualified by her constitution, her temperament, her condition, her character! And what destinies are committed to her care! She first forms her child's conscience; nay, with such a relying spirit are the questions even in

prattling infancy put to her, — "Mother, is this right? is this wrong?" — that it is hardly too much to say of this parent, "She *is* the child's conscience." Of how many pure affections and ennobling virtues is she at once the direct teacher and the daily model! If true to her station, she is a living transcript of the wise man's image of "a virtuous woman," — a combination of industry and discretion, and of kindness and piety, which the influence of the Gospel alone can produce. There is a trust in her hands, than which earth does not present one more sacred or responsible. She is the instructress of infant immortals; to her is confided the care of that portion of man's nature before which the body sinks to insignificance, and to which, as a head-spring of life, not even the intellect, with its angel capacities and its highest soarings, can be justly compared. It is her part to train the affections in their earliest buddings and at their most decisive period. How many of the wise and good owe the germs of all that they are to a mother's fostering spirit! How much of deep sensibility, of gentle virtue, of martyr-like adherence to truth and right, might be traced to maternal fidelity! I sometimes, indeed, doubt whether *one*, blessed by a good mother in his early days, will prove ultimately and hopelessly recreant. Happy is she who walks before her sons and daughters in true uprightness. Thrice blessed is that parent whose love is guided by wisdom, whose authority is blended with forbear-

ance, whose even discipline shows that passion does not irritate or harden, nor indulgence spoil, the objects in her charge ; but that, in oneness of mind with her favored companion, she directs these tender hearts through filial obedience on earth up to the love of their Supreme Parent in heaven.

This effect will be at once anticipated where the father is an image of our Divine Parent. His character then helps the child to understand that of God. He is the principal in the great school of domestic piety. Just in all his commands, kind in his every act, never sparing himself where the happiness, and especially where the virtue, of his child is concerned, — commending cordially all that deserves approbation, and reproving always in evident sorrow and not with anger, — how easy is it to win a child blessed with such an earthly father to love his Father in heaven ! Our Saviour directs us to address God by this title, and it is from this relation we derive our clearest and most delightful views of the Divine character. The head of a pious and well-ordered family affords a beautiful counterpart of the God of all families ; he is in the likeness of our Divine Guardian, the object of an affection which is chastened by a becoming reverence. The exercise of these sentiments toward him is a discipline for that mingled love and adoration due to the great Protector of man. That son who bestows on this earthly benefactor his rightful tribute of respect, obedience, and trust, is made

meet thereby for that holier fear, that full and sacred homage, and all those childlike returns, we owe to the Sustainer of our lives. And that father who, by his faithful instructions and kind, though firm, training, copies his own great Master above, shows forth in celestial colors the beauty and power of the Christian faith. His children are indeed "arrows in the hand of the mighty"; they are "olive-plants round about his table." And on him shall the blessing at last be pronounced, — "Well done, good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, be thou ruler over many things."

As we said of the mother, so must we now say of the father; it is fearful to contemplate his influence. His words and his ways do something every passing day, either to bless or to blight the tender germs on which they fall. To be a good father, — how much is implied in it! To educate a son wisely and well, to encourage and call forth all that is purest in him, and to check in the very bud whatever seems wrong in his tendencies, to establish his principles, to watch against and prevent corrupt communications, to inspire love, and at the same time to secure obedience and command respect, — how arduous is the task! and yet, to fail in it, what bitterness is there in the thought!

It is not easy to exaggerate the influence of a true mother over a devoted daughter. As the little one advances from the helplessness of the cradle, through

her dependent girlhood, the affection of this trusted one toward her assumes a new, and, if possible, a more beautiful form, until at length the mother sees before herself the ripened fruit of her toils, the companion her own hand has raised up. Grateful to her inmost heart must be this treasure, and delightful to every eye is the spectacle of a true mother and a devoted daughter. On the one side we see wisdom and a self-denying love; on the other, unlimited confidence leaning upon parental counsel, as the vine winds its tendrils about its ever-trusted support.

Consider, now, the tie between brothers and sisters. Dependent alike on parental care, their relation is suited to call forth the deep and unselfish affections of our nature. If they owe their virtue in common to a father's admonitions and encouragements and to a mother's gentler assistances, there is much of this good which they can bestow on each other. The elder can aid in how many ways the younger, the more prudent the thoughtless, the advanced the tender and inexperienced! To what exalted deeds and worthy attainments does one bright example sometimes incite others of the same family circle! Many a youthful folly has been amended by a brother's counsel. Think of the instances, too, in which a sister, by mild persuasions and by her own praiseworthy qualities, has moulded the character of those in the same dear relation with herself. In the fraternal tie, indeed, there is hardly a virtue, either

active or passive, but may find incitements to its culture and growth. Wherever in the wide world God has formed this interesting bond, there, by a mutual acknowledgment of faults and forgiveness of errors, are souls trained up to confess their sins before Heaven. And there, too, through an accustomed well-doing in the thousand nameless kindnesses of the fireside, is the bright reward held out to those who follow the self-denying Saviour effectually secured.

Home affords a preparatory stage, in all its ties and influences, for the formation of those traits demanded in our broader social relations. The judgment of Lamartine is wise when he says, — "I have always loved to know the homes and the domestic circumstances of those with whom I have anything to do in the world. It is a part of themselves ; it is a second external physiognomy, which gives the key to their disposition and destiny." The fireside is a primary school for all who are to sustain the conflicts and meet the shocks of this rude world. It will not do to expose the germs of faith and the unfixed principles of the little child to the full dangers of life at once. The plant cannot endure yet the rough winds of heaven ; we must place it within sheltering walls. Home, with its genial atmosphere and its softer influences, is indispensable to our starting goodness. The youthful heart is a tender scion ; when kindred and friends have faithfully cherished it, then it may be left to sustain itself. Let its boughs spread forth far

and wide. Send out the young probationer, and let him wrestle himself into Christian energy. Let the contact be with neighbour, fellow-citizen, countryman, all of his race. And fear not, for, thus armed, the dutiful son shall become the pure patriot, the good Christian, the true man. And the daughter, she who was mindful in past time of her parents and sisters, and who graced the little sphere of her birth, shall be everywhere welcomed, as an ally of truth and virtue, not only the joy of her nearest companion, and the devoted matron, but a "sister of charity," an heir and favorite of Heaven.

The fireside is, again, friendly to moral and spiritual excellence, because we are there most intimately known, and therefore most truly sincere. Christianity bids us be "pure in heart"; it looks mainly at our feelings and motives. But, while in the broad world, we are peculiarly tempted to transgress its command. Our secular interest calls for deference and external attentions to others. For this cause alone passion may be curbed, moderation and forbearance exhibited, and a winning courtesy assumed. The desire of popular favor, the restraints of custom, the fear of man, — nothing deeper than these is needed to smooth every asperity of evil, and represent virtue in her fairest costume. Insensibly in this way a polished exterior may usurp that place which Christianity gives only to a single-hearted goodness; and thus the garb of meekness, humility,

or disinterestedness may cover up a sordid, resentful, and self-elated spirit.

But at home, where we are seen just as we really are, our motives habitually disclosed, and our true feelings and opinions laid bare, — there, if a kind deed be apparently performed, the reality is usually as pure as the appearance, that which is within corresponds to that which is without. For pride is not there to veil our infirmities, nor ambition to toil for applause; and neither hope nor fear comes in to corrupt our motives. In the common phrase, "we act ourselves out."

Now, is it not much to escape the temptations of insincerity and deceit? Will not integrity be nurtured by the consciousness that we stand before an all-searching tribunal? Before the public eye, on that wide stage where all is gilded, illuminated, and unwontedly transformed, we may almost imperceptibly assume good qualities, and so pass for more than our worth. But in the hallowed recesses of home we are "weighed in the balance," and there the coin is stamped at its true value. The habit of being sincere in one place cannot but do something toward making us sincere in all places. Let us then give thanks that there is one unfailing ordeal, one situation, where all things invite and urge us to the high calling of the Christian, to "simplicity and godly sincerity."

And now let me say, it is home to which we must

turn for our truest earthly enjoyments. This remark has been anticipated by all I have said of the elevating and purifying nature of its influences. For religion, let its effects be felt where they may, leads directly to happiness. But there are deep, substantial pleasures to be found only in the domestic circle. The family, I have already said, is a divine institution ; it was constituted by our Father to be a means of unequalled satisfactions to his children. Its passing scenes afford that quiet enjoyment which is immeasurably more to us than the exciting and fitful pleasures of society. There, too, are embraced those ties whose very purity is a pledge of the joys they bring. Other friends may fail us, and we may be alienated from unworthy companions ; absence dissolves other bonds ; caprice breaks how many, and with them vanish the bright visions of future happiness they promised. But brothers and sisters are still left to us ; and they will stand by us against the false and the estranged ; and, so long as life lasts, we can find a smile and a welcome from parental love.

Home is the chief seat of our joy, from the reminiscences it yields of that one friend who knew no happiness like that of befriending us. That mother's face was a perpetual sunbeam in our early days ; she had a place in our hearts none else ever entered. She was the kind mediator who drew for us many a favor from a less tender, it may be a less weakly in-

dulgent, father. To her we ran with every childish want and every simple tale. In our absence, to her was always addressed the first confiding letter; she received the earliest tidings of our success, and the first call for sympathy when we failed. The thought of her was uppermost when the tears of home-sickness fell fastest. That dear image was enshrined among the sweetest thoughts of home; and when brothers and sisters came forth to meet us on our return, she, we knew, would lead the train. Her gentle voice even now rises over the loud swell of the discordant years, and tells us there is no place like that home; and we feel assured, that, while memory lasts, that voice will not die in our ears, nor the conviction leave us, that our present home can give us no joy deeper or more enduring than that which still floats with angel form over the roof beneath which we first saw the light of this eventful world.

"Home of our childhood! how affection clings
And hovers round thee with her seraph wings!
Dearer thy hills, though clad in autumn brown,
Than fairest summits which the cedars crown!
Sweeter the fragrance of thy summer breeze,
Than all Arabia breathes along the seas!
The stranger's gale wafts home the exile's sigh,
For the heart's temple is its own blue sky!"

How dear, as we proceed, seem the precincts of home! If peace and concord twine our souls in harmony there, if every bond be sealed by virtue, and if

religion be our common guide and staff, then here is our happiest temporal portion. And where, I will add, if not here, among hearts thus purely connected, is there a foretaste of heavenly felicities? Yes, for what *is* Heaven? What, but the final home of the spirit, — a haven to the long-tossed mariner, — that better country, toward which, as strangers and pilgrims on earth, we now journey? There all form but one great brotherhood, one happy, reunited circle. Such, in anticipation, is a Christian family. All we have ever done to prepare for our final home has qualified us for domestic duties and fireside enjoyments. The grosser attachments of this life, those founded on interest, or passion, or lust, are inconstant and perishable. Not so with the virtuous relations of birth and affinity. In them all is permanent, because all is pure. When the perplexing cares of the day are over, and evening brings the good man to that joyous retreat where his best affections centre, so soothed and composed is his spirit, that he almost enters upon that "rest which remaineth for the people of God." He now feels that there is a golden chain, whose lowest link touches earthly relations, but whose highest and purest fastens on that "house not made with hands."

What I have said of the purifying influence of our domestic relations one upon the other is true, also, of the events which occur at the fireside. They furnish continual incentives to personal piety. Let them

be joyous or sad, they each speak to us of heavenly things. What a day is that which introduces a new immortal to the family circle! What unimagined sensations thrill through the bosoms of the inexperienced parents! The most thoughtless can hardly fail at such a moment to lift a tribute of gratitude to the gracious Giver. Even infants can awaken in us a moral power. At the coming of the little stranger, a new spring of feeling gushes forth in the parents' hearts. The father feels that he is another man. "He looks up toward heaven, and finds no difficulty in conceiving of a bliss of which he has had a foretaste on earth"; and the mother is conscious of receiving a divine dew on that soil which we can see was so adapted by nature for spiritual fruits.

As the child grows up, each changing period utters some loud call for parental devotion; and when at length the day arrives in which the son is to go forth from the paternal roof, the mother cannot but utter a fervent petition that her loved child may be shielded by Heaven, and the father is constrained to invoke for him the helping hand of Almighty Love. And the son, too, must feel that he is now giving himself up to a new and Divine Guardian. Perhaps the daughter, after sharing the unmeasured kindnesses of a dear home, has reached the period when another heart is to receive, and another arm to protect, her through life. What an hour for the mother! She alone can describe her deep and mingled emotions,

her hopes, her anxieties, her prayers. The father, — think of him, his gain, his loss! An unaccustomed tear steals down that cheek, and the light of another world is reflected upon it. What conflicting sensations fill, too, the soul of this daughter! But, whether memory shade her eye with sorrow, or anticipation send bright rays from it, she will not, she cannot, one would think, forbear to raise one thought above, to lift one all-confiding petition to that Being who holds her untried lot in his fatherly hand.

A more solemn parting still, one we cannot avoid, awaits the family circle. It is a fearful truth, that we live in a world where love and death must meet. But He who alike weaves and sunders the tenderest ties can mitigate the bitterness of every bereavement. While he chastens, he would also spiritualize, his weeping child. There is much in the sicknesses he sends to intenerate and bless our inward nature. The patient sufferer is made better by his pains; a new love is awakened by the gentle offices of those who wait round his bed, soothe his pangs, and allay his restlessness. His mind is led upward, and he catches tones from angel harps. If he be restored to health and strength, he cannot soon forget that Divine love which smoothed his pillow amid the solitude of his midnight weariness. Yes, sickness is often a blessing in disguise. Nor, though it terminate fatally, can we doubt that God is still with

us. Death is irradiated by our Saviour. The hushed step, the suppressed voice, the subdued countenance, of all who draw nigh the departing one, show us that messengers from above are even now in the room.

> " Something divine and dim
> Seems going by one's ear,
> Like parting wings of cherubim,
> Who say, ' We 've finished here.' "

Did we indeed regard it aright, we should feel, that, in many of its aspects, home is a temple in which we all minister as priests. No place would be to us more sacred than this where we dwell. I have entered the magnificent cathedral in the Old World, and, although I could not accord with the faith it upheld, yet I have been elevated and awe-struck by its majestic pillars, its vast arches, its ocean-toned organ, and its solemn chants. The incense, as it was wafted to the ceiling, seemed the breath of devotion, and the fair flowers around me were pouring forth fragrance to Heaven. So would I that our dwellings were each regarded ; purity and piety are in harmony with home. Music should float round its walls, and, while by its sacredness it sanctified the individual, it should weld all hearts together, and lift the pure mass to our common Father. And vases should be there, filled with flowers culled from the fairest gardens of earth, and prefiguring the garden of God.

The picture I have drawn of the influences of home is surely a pleasant one, and the images connected with it one would fain realize. But are they not exaggerated and fanciful? "Where," it may be asked, "do we see piety the presiding genius of the household, and the Christian virtues and graces all taking root there? Whose is the home so delightfully instrumental in building up the character of its inmates? Where can we find all this home-born union and peace you describe? Point us to the family in which all are of one mind, husband and wife, father and mother, brethren and sisters, all moving on in this beautiful concert." I answer, you can see it in every family where *the spirit of Christ* is the controlling spirit. If piety is a stranger within our doors, if parental fidelity and filial respect and brotherly love are unknown there, and fathers and mothers are contentious, and children are graceless, then is not the religion of Jesus the law and guide of the household; then are we the servants, not of the Prince of Peace, but of our own dark, self-enslaving passions.

It may not be disguised, that, while the domestic relations are friendly to our moral and spiritual improvement, they, like all other blessings, bring with them their dangers. Not of necessity shall we avail ourselves of the high privileges of home. We may abuse the gifts, we may neglect the precious opportunities it affords, and thus, instead of a sanctuary, it

may become a snare to our souls. Must it not be said that the word *home* suggests to some minds, in consequence of this perversion of its true ends, no higher associations than those of a resting-place from labor, a convenient shelter, or a field for fashion and display? True it is, and a sad truth, that many toil only for the outward comforts of life, and sacrifice their peace and happiness, — ay, what is unspeakably more to be lamented, sacrifice their very *souls* — to the external arrangements of the household. They live a life of miserable servitude, drudging, and degrading themselves, perhaps, for the sake of those things which perish in the using.

But there are moments when even these, and the veriest worshippers of pride and fashion also, feel rebuked in their course. They do sometimes see how mournfully they are coming short of the legitimate purposes and influences of a Christian home. Let any one pause and ask himself, "For what end was I placed amid these domestic relations?" and there will be the great, universal reply, We do not cluster in families that we may eat and drink, and be clothed, and then die, — perish like the brute creation. No, there is a solemn significance in these manifold ties; they all point to something higher and holier than themselves; the earthly cord is intertwined with heavenly threads. O, how would our homes be transformed, did these rays from the great "Light of the World" beam steadily on

their bosom! We should then perceive a Divinity every day in our midst. We should emulate one another, — husband and wife, father and mother, brothers and sisters, sons and daughters, the nearest and the most remote relatives; we should strive, with a godlike disinterestedness, which should most love, and most live for, the other.

And now, were personal piety cherished by the fireside, fidelity at home would make us faithful abroad; the quiet influences of every domestic relation and event would flow out and flow over our entire character. Our country, the Church, and the world would then see our "light so shine" that they would "glorify the Father." Only let Christ be the Master of the household, and all its issues are pure. Then our gains are hallowed as the gift of God, — above every honor is "that honor which cometh from above," — and we drink of the river of God's pleasure. Amid the cares and perplexities of the fireside, we can now preserve a calm, — that holy calm which befits beings who have a home in the heavens. Our family becomes more and more like the great family on high. And there we anticipate, as one by one these dear ties shall be severed, having borne the burdens and quickened the virtues of each other here, that we shall renew every pure bond of earth, and give thanks, not only for the delights, but also for the severest discipline, of our early Christian home.

CHAPTER II.

THE PARENT. — HIS OFFICE NOT TRANSFERABLE.

We are living in an age which abounds in instruc tions to the young. At no period of the world has so much been said, and written, and done, on this great subject. We have week-day schools, in which the youth of both sexes, a multitude we can scarce number, are everywhere engaged. And the standard of education in these institutions is continually rising. High and yet higher schools are established, and more and more branches are crowded into their list of studies. Seminaries for ornamental education are increasing; private teachers are employed, and no expense is spared to give power to the voice and the ear and the touch in the sweet sounds of music, and to impart skill to the hand in the magic art of delineation, and in the mimic hues of the pencil. Nor is this all; when the toils and assiduities of the week are over, we open the door of the Sunday school, and our children again gather, and search the Scriptures, and converse on the high themes of religion, guided, throughout our land, by a

great company of devoted and faithful teachers. So that here, if nowhere else, it is literally true of our children and youth, that they have, in the words of Paul, "ten thousand instructors in Christ."

And now what more, it may be asked, can be done for them? Is not this a blessed age for the young? And will they not soon be perfect in knowledge, and wisdom, and all manner of excellence? If it depend exclusively on a vast array of public means and of social arrangements, and liberal expenditures, to make them so, no doubt they will be perfect.

But does it depend entirely on one or all of these things? May we, having provided the best possible week-day schools and teachers of accomplishments, and Sunday-schools also, sit down content, and rest in the assurance, that, as guardians of the young, our task is complete? I fear this is the prevalent disposition. But if we heed the counsels of Scripture, of history, or of daily experience, we shall ascertain our error. We shall find that it is possible — in the very midst of this mighty system of educational advantages, it is possible this may be the result — that our youth, instead of rising toward intellectual and moral perfection, shall decline in mental vigor, and sink lower and lower in the prime qualities of a reverent piety and a disinterested, energetic virtue.

The cause of this declension, if it take place, will be found in a disregard of the great truth indicated

in the language of the Apostle, that, "though we have ten thousand instructors" beside, "we have not many fathers." This is the startling fact, that, multiply as we may other instructors, they cannot, either or all of them, supply the place of those natural teachers, the father and the mother. If there be neglect here, then it is as if everything were neglected. A child has but one father and one mother; and whoever else may, to any extent, greater or less, perform for them a part of the parental duties, no one can become, in full, either the one or the other. The attempt to substitute any teacher, guardian, or friend for the parent, to put public in the place of private and domestic education, ever has been, and ever will be, disastrous to the young.

Our schools, in the week and on the Sabbath, are all good, — all needed, — all, perhaps, indispensable to the complete, harmonious, Christian education of our youth. But it is only as auxiliaries to something still higher and more important than themselves, it is only as assistants in the great seminary over which the father and the mother are principals, that they can be safely employed and trusted. Put them at the head, and you reverse the order of God and nature, — you make that first which should be last, and that last which should be first.

No influence is so deep and decisive as that of the mother. Napoleon was once asked what could be

done for France ; his reply was, " We need good mothers." In our own country, what gave us a Washington ? The fidelity of Mary, his mother. We are told that the elder Adams, being once questioned respecting the education of his son, John Quincy, after giving an account of the various literary institutions in which he had placed him, abroad and at home, closed his account with these emphatic words : — " But, after all, my son had a mother." When we add to this the fidelity of his honored father, and the illustrious example of his character, we can see whence came the bright jewels in his moral crown.

Are sufficient efforts made to enlighten and to impress the parents in this community ? In this age, when the pen and the tongue are acting with unprecedented vigor, we find very much addressed to our children. The public school abounds in lectures, encouragements, and admonitions to its pupils. The Sunday school has its lessons, addresses, and exhortations. Books without number are written on the duties of the young ; they are thus incessantly plied with instructions, intellectual, moral, and religious. We have, too, Normal schools to educate teachers, and conventions and lesser meetings for Sunday-school teachers. But who, meantime, counsels the parent ? While his child is at school being taught his obligations, he is at home untaught and neglected. He may hear, once or twice in the re-

volving year, a sermon on parental duty. He may chance on some volume, or an occasional paragraph in the newspapers, setting forth his momentous relation and influence. But can this suffice? Nay, I have sometimes thought it is the parent, rather than the teacher or the child, who needs this array of aids and instructions. I am sure it is ignorance alone that can explain the fearful prevalence of errors in domestic education. The father loves his son; he would not willingly neglect to train him aright; but he does not know, — *he does not know* the best means and methods of making him what his heart desires to see him. The mother would not for worlds do any harm to this daughter. No; she is full of affection and full of devotedness to her; but alas! her love is blind. She does not perceive, that, instead of educating her well, preparing her for mental excellence, self-dependence, self-sacrifice, real piety, and an unblemished worth, she is leading her every day in the opposite direction. She is doing what for her right hand she would not do, could she foresee the result of her course. Therefore do I say that the times call, — out of the bosom of all these schools, and helps, and appliances for the young, — they call for a prophet-tongued eloquence to teach parents the duties, the responsibilities, the toils, that rest inevitably — directly, personally, inevitably — upon them.

I speak of responsibilities. And who can or does

doubt that the parent is bound to do something for his child? Questions may arise as to what he must do; but that, as fathers and as mothers, we are solemnly required to do something for our children, all will agree. A little one is placed in our hands: do we think of the vast influences and issues connected with this gift?

"A babe in a house is a well-spring of pleasure, a messenger of peace and love;
A resting-place for innocence on earth; a link between angels and men;
Yet it is a talent of trust, a loan to be rendered back with interest.
A delight, but redolent of care; honey-sweet, but lacking not the bitter;
For character groweth day by day, and all things aid it in unfolding;
And the bent unto good or evil may be given in the hours of infancy.
Scratch the green rind of a sapling, or wantonly twist it in the soil,
The scarred and crooked oak will tell of thee for centuries to come;
Even so mayest thou guide the mind to good, or lead it to the marrings of evil.
With his mother's milk the young child drinketh in education."

And now, seeing this great work begins at the cradle, we cannot too earnestly impress parents with the inalienable nature of their task. No father would deny his obligation to support and maintain

his child. "He that doth not provide for his own household is worse than an infidel, and hath denied the faith." But is this all we owe our children? Are there no other duties, to neglect which is to "deny the faith"? The parent is bound to do all in his power to secure to his child sound health and a vigorous bodily constitution; he must be taught the need of temperance, of exercise, and the daily endurance of hardship and labor. It is said one half the human race die under the age of five. What a fearful disclosure is this of parental ignorance and neglect!

To physical education we must add the culture of the mind. If it be the part of an unbeliever to provide neither food nor raiment for his offspring, and to take no care of their bodily health, it is equally criminal to bestow no thought on their intellectual improvement. That mother who is so absorbed in society and amusements, or in domestic avocations, as to forego all mental and cultivated intercourse with her daughters, commits a fatal error. And that father who spends his whole time and strength in laying up property for his sons, to the neglect of their higher nature, — who is so weary at night that he cannot read a book or talk with his children on any mental or elevating subject, — may yet rue his course. For what will it profit him to acquire for them silver and gold, stocks and estates, if he fail also to leave them the richer bequest of well-cultivated intellects,

a taste for profitable reading, a love of home enjoyments, habits of order and quietness, a sensibility to all that is noble in character, and a love of the Father, who gave us these precious powers for his own honor and for the glorious work of doing good to our fellow-immortals ?

Here opens to us another sphere of parental obligation, — that of moral and religious education. Here is a vineyard which no husbandmen can dress except those appointed by God. A child may have a thousand other spiritual instructors ; he can have but one mother and one father. We owe none can tell how much to the long line of teachers, who begin with our children in the alphabet, and carry them up, from stage to stage, until they complete their school education. To every one who inculcates a good principle in their presence, incites them by generous examples, or suggests and amends their errors, our debt is indeed great. And large, too, are our obligations to that blessed company of Sunday-school instructors, who, from Sabbath to Sabbath, punctually and patiently unfold to them the teachings of the Saviour, draw out their best thoughts and feelings, and quicken them to the love of God and man. But still there is a void left, a wide void, in their moral needs, which none but the parent can fill.

What is the seat and centre of a child's sweetest associations ? Not the school-room, pleasant as that may be rendered by a wise and gentle teacher,

and by congenial companions. Not, either, the church or the vestry where the Sunday school gathers, though the faithful teacher will secure a love in the hearts of her class which neither life nor death can obliterate. But, after all, "there is no place like home," — there is no word that calls forth such music as that. Around the fireside it is that our earliest and tenderest affections cluster. And among all the sweet memories of the past, there are none so sweet, none so enduring, as these. Years may roll over us, old ties may be broken and new ones formed, but for ever do we turn back to that dear spot, our childhood's home. And, amid the names and the forms that revisit the mind, the dearest and fairest of all are associated with those two beings, father and mother. The words they addressed to us, their lives and their deeds, these tower above everything else; and they have gone deepest into our souls, and done most to make us what we now are.

Such is the appointment of God. He is the author of the family ties, and we can trace his wisdom in creating them and clothing them with such power. He has made the heart of the parent the stronghold of the human affections. There is no love to be compared with that of a mother. What will she not do, what will she not suffer, for the child of her bosom? And why is she endowed with this love? Partly, beyond question, that she may preserve the lives and

the health of her offspring. But that is not all ; she was intended also to preserve their spiritual life and their moral health. The memory of what our mother did for us, and of her countless sacrifices, tends to soften and improve us in all subsequent years. What we did not appreciate at that period comes back to us now in angel voices, and, whatever other kind friends we have since found, we realize that we have had but one mother. And if we can remember a father's wisdom, and self-denial for our sakes, — if we can recall his earnest precepts, his anxious counsels and warnings, and think of prayers he offered with us and for us, and of his own elevated example, — we must, indeed, again and again feel, that, though we had instructors many, and perhaps faithful ones, too, we have had but one father.

Say I not truly, then, that no parent can delegate his office and his responsibilities to any other human being? There are those who desire to do this. We sometimes hear of a father who brings his son to the judge on the bench, and asks him to provide a home for him in some house of correction or reformation ! Another would give up his child, so obstinate and vicious is he, to the state. There are authentic accounts of parents in London contriving to induce their children to commit crimes, in order to throw them upon the state for support, and thus relieve themselves from the cost and care of bringing them up. In 1847 there were four cases in one

court, where the parents had endeavoured to escape the natural burden of their children by prosecuting them; and in one case there was good ground to suspect that money had been intentionally placed in the way of a lad by his parents, to incite him to theft. An American writer tells us he has repeatedly had children offered him in the streets of London by their own mothers. So terrible is the influence of poverty, in not only obliterating the sense of parental responsibility, but even destroying the natural affections. Indeed, I have seen accounts of more than one instance of a mother taking the life of her own child to procure for herself bread from the fees of a burial society. We have Reform Schools and Farm Schools in this country, and how many other institutions to take the place of parental care and education! These are blessed institutions; they pick up the vagrant boy, and save many a sinking soul. But they cannot, by the utmost vigilance and faithfulness of their overseers and teachers, — no, never can they supply perfectly the place of a pure and devoted mother, and a temperate, judicious, and exemplary father. We speak of the parental care and expenditures of the city and the state, and this is high praise. But, after all, let the state pour out its thousands, and let private benevolence give what it may, and let it add its personal efforts, — let a Howard, a Fry, or a Dix visit every prison, and toil on to the utmost in their godlike services, — they cannot rise to the lofty

rank of the parent. They may imitate the good father or mother, but it is only at a distance that they can follow their Heaven-appointed, Heaven-seeking steps.

I have spoken of vicious and unfaithful parents giving up their children to other hands. But it is not these alone who desire to free themselves of parental responsibility and labor. Many have moments at least, — very good persons will attest this, — moments in which they would fain transfer their children to some other care. When the son demeans himself well, is gentle and obedient and kind, they enjoy their charge. But let him grow disobedient, stubborn, selfish, and untractable, they desire then to part from him. If the daughter be domestic, helpful, self-sacrificing, then she is the delight of her mother. It is only needful that she become indolent, passionate, or for any reason unmanageable, and straightway the parent would send her from home, or consign her to another's care. She imagines, perhaps, that the good of the child will be consulted by this arrangement. Seldom, I believe, is this the case. It is never more true than here, as a general rule, that "whom God hath joined together man may not put asunder." He hath established the bond between this father and this son, and He it is who stationed this mother to be the guardian of her child. Let them be slow, very slow to call in teacher, governess, nurse, brother,

sister, uncle, aunt, any inmate or any helper, and take the crown from their own brow and place it on his or hers.

The present age is marked by the want among children of a spirit of reverence, subordination, and docility. To what is this owing? Not to any change in the nature of childhood from past periods, when respect and order were almost universal. Every child has the faculty of reverence in him; there is something which excites his wonder and awe. No one is unmoved by the mighty powers of Nature; her awful, majestic, uncomprehended forces inspire the schoolboy with reverence. Nay, every child does respect some human being and human power. There are men before whom the proudest do quail; office, station, simple character, can, for they do, subdue the very scoffer.

Our institutions are unfriendly, perhaps, to reverence. The cry of "Liberty and Equality" brings down all to a level, the middle-aged, and sometimes the old, as well as the young. But even here, where ranks and titles are abolished, there is still left a foundation for the sentiment of veneration. Let parents do their whole duty, and they can resist, to a great degree, this unhappy tendency of our age and country. Let them awaken a regard for their own position and authority. It needs no Puritanic sternness to do this; a gentle, steady, firm hand is all that is wanted. There is no child who may not be con-

trolled and made respectful by a patient and uniform discipline.

But rare are the instances of reverence where a child is left to the day school or the Sunday school for his entire moral education. I account partly for the present spirit of disrespect among the young by the fact, that parents do not now educate their children themselves, as their fathers did, in the principles of piety and duty ; they do not, like them, thus make the family altar a centre of sacred and venerable associations. If you give up your son and daughter entirely to other hands to teach and train, you cannot reasonably expect that love and respect which flow from personal culture by the parent. Our youth will never walk steadily in the heavenward path, unless we add to their Sunday-school instruction that of the fireside.

Nor is instruction sufficient ; there is a work to be done at home for their characters which no teacher, however faithful, can do for them at school. Every good lesson they learn on Sunday must be followed up by parental watchfulness on the week-day. Woe to those who consciously resign the whole religious care of their children to any other being on earth ! Blessed are they who make it a point of conscience to reiterate and to carry out in actual life the good things inculcated in the Sunday school ! Where this is done, the child grows up " subject,' like Jesus in his childhood, " to his parents," and

never utters in their presence the language, or exhibits the manner, of any other than a perfectly loving and reverent regard.

The labor to be performed is personal; no foreign hand can perform it. We can hire no substitute, we can employ no agent. Here we stand, and here we must work. The influence of the parent is the mightiest on earth, and it must be used, — used every day while his child is beneath his roof, — used early and late, with prayer and with trust. We have other talents which we may misemploy, and recover, in part at least, our loss; but this, if we waste it or let it be idle, involves an irreparable loss. We are making a mark on the characters of our children which time will never efface. Let it be done with a full sense of its consequences.

CHAPTER III.

THE STEP-MOTHER.

FROM what has been said in the preceding chapter, it follows necessarily that no relation in life is more delicate, and no office in the domestic circle more difficult to discharge, than that of a step-mother. Her position is peculiar, inasmuch as it involves duties for the faithful discharge of which there seem often to be no adequate motives. Among the obstacles in the way of these duties, two stand prominent.

In the first place, every child needs the constant care of a purely disinterested nurse, guardian, and friend. Nothing but a spirit of entire self-sacrifice will prompt to this care. But where are we to look for this spirit? Who will consent to give up her time, her pleasures, her labors, her very sleep and rest, for the little dependent one? What fountain of love is so deep that it will never fail amid this perpetual draught on its waters? God has created one, and it is in the bosom of that being who bore the child. *There* is an affection that will minister to its

every manifested want, nay, will seek out and watch for new wants ; it will be never weary of well-doing. It will bear with ill-humor and peevishness, with obstinacy, obtuseness, and every intractable quality. When the child tires, it will rejoice to stretch forth a helping hand ; it will have a kiss for every tear, and a kind tone for every trouble. No tasks will be imposed beyond the strength of childhood, and no habit permitted which tends to injure health, character, heart, or mind. When sickness comes, a ministering angel is near to cherish the helpless sufferer ; it is a mother who holds him in her arms or bends over his pillow, and she never chides his restlessness or rebukes his caprice. There she sits, day after day, and night after night, by his bedside, an impersonation of that divine charity which "suffereth long, and is kind, which is not easily provoked, which beareth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things," which, in the glorious language of the Apostle, "never faileth."

But in the heart of the step-mother there is no such natural fountain of unfailing love. The tie that binds her to the child in her care was created by man. She does not possess — and it is unreasonable to demand of her — that deep, inexhaustible affection which is spontaneous in the child's own mother. At first, certainly, she must be governed more by intellectual considerations, or at best by high moral principle, than by any maternal feeling.

If her character be elevated and pure, she will be faithful to this child from a sense of duty. In aid of this motive may come in a love of the child as the offspring of her husband, or as a member of her own family. But what elevated principle, what rare self-sacrifice, will it discover, if she never neglect her duty to her step-child! Few will rise at once to such exalted virtue. In some instances has the little one never secured its rightful place in the heart of this parent. He or she has been governed, not in love, but with the rod. There has been an exercise of stern parental authority, never mitigated by parental kindness. Heavy tasks are imposed, and no drop of mercy mingles in the cup of justice. Sometimes we see the cruel taskmaster demanding the full tale of bricks when no straw is given. Day after day the hard "stint" is imposed, no rest is allowed, recreation is forbidden, and the little sufferer becomes haggard with a premature age. Study is heaped upon study, the intermission must be filled up with work, each holiday is grudged, and vacation, the joy of weary childhood, must be all occupied in sitting upright in a chair, and plying the needle or reading a book.

Who can be surprised, that, under this iron rule, the sweets of this happy period are sometimes turned into "the gall of bitterness"? The morning of life is thus shadowed by an unnatural darkness; and, instead of filial love, we see alienation, hostility, and

hatred, with all its desolating effects, take possession of the child.

This leads me to say, that another great source of difficulty in this relation is the fact, that children can have no natural affection for a step-mother. She comes to them a stranger; and if it be hard for her to do her own duty, from the absence of a natural love, how much harder must it needs be for them? She may be expected, from her age, and her station also, to be influenced in her relation to them by high moral considerations, by a sense of her duty to them, to her husband and his family, and by her responsibility to the God and Father of all families. But these children, so young, so inexperienced, can hardly be required to act from so pure and elevated motives. Much must be pardoned in every child; how much in those thus bereft of a mother's fostering care! What impartial judgment, and what steady self-possession, are needed in her who has taken that mother's place! How ought she to watch her own heart, and guard it against selfish feelings! Let her make constant allowance for the condition of these children. She must consider, over and over, the disadvantages of their situation. She can never create in them a natural love for herself, and the cheerful obedience that may flow from it. But by assiduity and faithfulness she can win their respect, secure their love, and so awaken a deep regard for her wishes and her happiness.

It is sometimes difficult for this parent to maintain her authority, on account of the injudicious interference of the connections, or the friends and acquaintances, of the children. They take part, perhaps, with every disposition to disregard her commands, if they do not say, in so many words, — "She is not your mother, and I would not obey her." There is a spirit thus fostered, which it may be harder to withstand than open disobedience. Perhaps it never breaks out in the rebellious language of "I wont mind you," but it still utters itself in actions, which often speak louder than words. Let the attempt never be made to subdue this spirit by physical force, or by harsh tones, angry looks, and virulent language. It must be met by gentleness, soothed by kindness, repressed by an angelic forbearance and patience ; in one word, it can only be overcome by a *steady faith in the omnipotence of Love.*

In addition to these trials, the step-mother is embarrassed by the difference between her own relation to the children of her husband and his. In ordinary cases, his love for them will be greater than hers, and this will incline him to a proportionate indulgence toward them. They soon perceive this, and it leads them to refer to his decision rather than hers on every disputed topic. They anticipate the greater kindness from him, and lean more and more toward him. The father is regarded as their best friend, and soon

odious comparisons are instituted, and these increase their alienation from her toward whom there should be an ever-growing love. Wherever parents, for any cause whatever, disagree in the management of their children, the consequences must be disastrous. Amid the contentions of father and mother, we see the character of the daughter "a coat of many colors," a building of incongruous materials, which cannot stand in this world of temptation and trial. And happy will it be if the sons do not betray the mournful effects of a family government which brings parents to shame.

If the step-mother become the parent of other children, her position is yet more trying to the character. The new-comer awakens an instinctive love, and this calls forth peculiar kindnesses. Her former children may imagine they see a partiality toward the little one by which they are made to suffer. Blessed is she — and we do witness such noble examples — who holds an even discipline over every child in these two conflicting relations; who resolves, and prays, and strives that she may deal in equal tenderness and equal justice to them all! Happy they who succeed in allaying every groundless suspicion, and make all feel that they have one and the same mother.

Indeed, the author has in mind more than one instance which goes to show that a step-mother can so conduct herself as to supply completely, and even

more than supply, the loss of the natural parent. The female heart is so constituted that the charge and responsibility of a little child draws out much of a mother's love toward it. It needs only a spirit of kindness sustained by a tender conscience, to prevent every evil we have adverted to, and make this relation an inestimable and permanent blessing to the once orphan child.

CHAPTER IV.

SCHOOL EDUCATION.

THE relations of the parent to the week-day schools in which his children are educated are so important, that a chapter must be given to their separate consideration. The child spends in these schools, in ordinary cases, six hours a day ; that is, from a third to one half of his conscious existence, between the ages of four and sixteen. It is this period which usually decides the character for life, and the large proportion of it spent in the school-room clothes that place with a momentous interest. A slight error on the part of any one concerned in the influences of the school-room, pursued from day to day and from year to year, may be followed by fearful results. Hence it is that no conscientious parent can fail to give this subject his constant and anxious attention.

What, then, are the duties of parents in relation to the week-day school ?

1. The first, beyond question, is to form a clear idea of the *object* of the school. Why all this care

of the State to foster this institution? Why do towns, districts, neighbourhoods, and families expend so much thought and so much treasure on the establishment of good schools? Or rather, what *ought* to be the great motive at the foundation of these labors and sacrifices? Is it the bestowing of knowledge on the young at which we supremely aim? If so, we commit an error on the threshold of this subject; for mere knowledge poured on the passive mind is of little avail. It loads the memory with a burden almost useless in practical life. No, the first aim should be to educate, that is, as the word signifies, to call forth, the mental powers of the child. His mind must be quickened, and exert itself vigorously, and increase in strength and in refinement, at each stage of his studies. Nor is this all; he should be so educated as to love knowledge for its own sake, and to carry with him through life a desire of constant intellectual improvement.

But is this the final end of the school-room? May the parent rest content with the intellectual progress of his child, and desire nothing more than to hear of his distinguished talents, and that he is a splendid scholar? Shall he judge the teacher by no other standard than his ability to press his pupils forward in their studies? This, I believe, is the usual criterion of excellence; but far, fatally far, does it fall short of the standard of a really *Christian* parent. With him the intellect never ranks highest

among the inward powers and possessions of his child. No; precious as is mental culture, and noble as are the attainments of a good education in this sense, there is one object still higher and better, and that is moral culture, the education of the child's conscience, the training of his will, the enlargement and purifying of his social affections. If this be the purpose of the fireside, it should be equally that of the school-room. Let the parent never be satisfied with anything below this; let him not be seduced by bright scholarship to neglect, or suffer the teacher to neglect, the care of his child's character. If that is steadily improving, if to knowledge is daily added virtue, then indeed is the teacher faithful, and the scholar is receiving a good education.

2. Regard your part as of equal importance with that of the teacher for the success of your children's school. Many, it is feared, think that when the school is once put in operation their work is done. They are anxious to reside near the school-room, they exert themselves to procure a teacher, and perhaps take a warm interest in the election of the school committee; but when the school begins, and they send their children supplied with books, all their solicitude suddenly departs. They remind one of the good deacon, who said that when his own minister was preaching he fell asleep, for he knew that then everything would go on well.

But nothing goes on well in that school where the parents of the children perform no duty toward it, and take no interest in its progress. The teacher is often baffled, and his hands are constantly weakened, by the indifference at home. If the attention of father and mother is remitted for a single day, that day is robbed of a part of its benefits to the scholar. The very *idea* that the parents observe his course and give him credit for fidelity is a stimulus to the teacher. And if the child has reason to believe that his parents only *think* of him as he passes from study to study, and especially if he believes they are made happy at the thought of his mental and moral improvement, he applies himself with redoubled vigor. Always, therefore, follow your children in mind to the school-room ; show the teacher that you prize his efforts, and are laboring at home to second them. Cultivate his acquaintance, and keep up more or less intercourse with him. Let your children see that you feel responsible in part for their progress, and consider that you have something every day to *do* in regard to their school ; in a word, think, plan, labor, to sustain the teacher.

3. Let the discipline of home combine with that of the school-room. If the teacher govern with gentleness joined to decision, so let the parent. It is sad to witness the conflicts of these two spheres of education. "When I am in the presence of either father or mother," said Lady Jane Grey, "whether

I speak, keep silence, sit, stand, or go, eat, drink, be merry or sad, be sewing, playing, dancing, or doing anything else, I must do it, as it were, in such weight, measure, and number, even so perfectly as God made the world, or else I am so sharply taunted, so cruelly threatened, yea, presently sometimes, with nips, and bobs, and other ways which I will not name, for the honor I bear them, so without measure misordered, that I think myself in hell, till time come that I must go to Mr. Elmer, who teacheth me so gently, so pleasantly, with such fair allurements to learning, that I think all the time nothing, whiles I am with him. And when I am called from him I fall on weeping, because, whatever I do else, but learning, is full of grief, trouble, fear, and whole misliking unto me."

Nothing more impedes the success of a teacher than parental neglect at home. What can any one do with those children who bring to the school-room a spirit of disobedience? It is cruel to complain of disorder there, if we allow it constantly in our families. How often do parents thwart a faithful instructor by indulging their children in habits of idleness! They paralyze his moral government through their disregard of the sacred duty of truthfulness in their children. A boy cannot be managed properly at school who is not conscientious at home. And what shall we say of that father who never yet taught his son, either by word or deed, the great object of

a school education? We need angels — for mortals cannot do the work — to teach well and rule well those children who are sent, one must almost believe, with an allowed and determined purpose of arraying themselves at once against the teacher, and vexing his spirit, and counteracting his efforts. When shall we join in making it the combined study at our firesides to relieve those who are now so often burdened by our thoughtless negligence, if not by our absolute labor to frustrate their success? We need to this end the heavenly spirit that animated the mother of Increase Mather, and, like her, to make *character* the first thing in our parental supplications. "Child," was her devoted address to him, "if God make thee a Good Christian and a Good Scholar, thou hast all that thy mother ever asked for thee." The Christian character, gentleness, obedience, tractableness toward God and man at home, is an earnest of good progress at school.

4. With this view of his duty, the parent will send his children regularly and punctually to school. If they are not there, to what purpose has the teacher been employed, and the school opened? If they do not use their school-books, why have you purchased them? The child who is irregular in attendance falls behind his class, loses his ambition, and finally his whole interest in the school. We make no progress in any pursuit when our interest in it has gone; and who has not noticed that those children

who are never absent always feel the deepest interest in their studies ? Their attendance is the thermometer by which you can measure the warmth of their love for the school. Keep them at home one day in each week, and you nearly neutralize the benefit of all the other days. Parents have no conception of the magnitude of the evil of irregular attendance at school. The father who threw, every week, a certain part of his money into the sea, would be regarded as cruel to his family, nay, as absolutely insane. But, by as much as knowledge is better than silver, and a good character better than fine gold, by so much worse are the consequences of taking our children's time from their school than throwing away the money we might leave them on our death-bed. Send your children with a miser's frugality, as far as possible, every day, and to every session of their school.

Punctuality is likewise all-important. To lose the first hour of the session is often to lose the best part, and sometimes the whole, of it. It breaks the thread of study, and makes each succeeding hour the harder for the pupil. Do not, then, detain your daughter from the opening hour ; show her that, if she is tardy, it shall not be the fault of her mother. Never listen to slight excuses for being late ; sickness and intense severity of weather are the only habitual excuses we should permit for absence or tardiness. When parents come to feel the necessity of this strict regular-

ity, a power will be set in motion far greater, and at the same time far less embarrassing and vexatious, than rigid rules made by teachers and committees.

5. That the school may prosper, parents must converse with their children in regard to its details and its progress. What is talked about in the family becomes important in their estimation. If they never hear a word said concerning their teacher, their studies, their lessons and recitations, they think their parents do not care for these things. Where food, dress, business, making money, or the faults of their neighbours, are every day discussed, they think these are matters of grave concern. But what must be their estimate of their school, if it is never mentioned, — if no earnestness is manifested about it, and no word or deed seems to show any special interest in it? Let it become a leading topic of conversation at the table, or in the evening, and a single term will produce a marvellous change in the children's devotion to it. They will be regular in their attendance, and study out of school as well as in it.

I would not encourage habits of excessive application. The tendency at this time, in many instances, is to force children forward too rapidly. Wherever the health suffers, or the disposition is made irritable, the child is doing too much; and let the parent say this to him or her. Let not an ambition to excel be indulged till the constitution be un-

dermined, and the seeds sown of disease and premature death. Nor let the temper be spoiled for the sake of making a good scholar. Health, equanimity, character, are better than all mere knowledge. Teach your children, in so many words, never to sacrifice the former to the latter.

6. And, to save their health and their virtue, as well as for other ends, parents should assist their children in learning their lessons. Every father, however ignorant, can do something in this way to help his sons. Every mother knows enough to teach the rudiments, at least, to her daughters. The mere attempt to do it encourages a child, and we should fail in these attempts much less seldom than we imagine. There are few branches of an elementary education in which neither parent can render any instruction whatever. And if, after failing yourself, you but call in the aid of an older brother or sister, you will afford invaluable assistance. Never turn a deaf ear to one troubled in his studies. Do something, rather, in leisure hours, to qualify yourself for coöperating with his teacher. If you can but help the little laborer over one hill-top, it may dry his tears, and make you an object of new love and respect.

7. Parents may do a good service to the school by attending its examinations, and witnessing the proficiency of their children. The presence of visitors is cheering to the teacher; it gives him palpable

evidence that he is not laboring in vain. If the parents and guardians of his pupils never enter the school-room, he naturally thinks they are unconcerned in regard to his exertions. They give him no credit for toil and success, and he comes at last to feel discouraged, and from discouragement the path is short to remissness and inaction. To gratify the teacher, therefore, and to give him strength, we should visit his school.

For the sake of his children, let the parent occasionally enter the school-room. It would animate them, not only at the moment of recitation, but in their hours of study. When they anticipate a father's smile and a mother's friendly eye on the day of examination, it inspires them through the whole previous term. They may fear the presence of unaccustomed teachers, of their school-committee, and of strangers, but they love that of their parents. It affords an incitement, sometimes more powerful, and often far more beneficial, than the dreaded inspection of cold observers.

It is well to drop in and see your children at their studies whenever you can. Do not wait for the day of public examination. Indeed, both teacher and children will prize a casual call more than those which are invited and formal. If you only look in for a few moments, it does them good. It becomes not only an intellectual stimulus, but a social benefit, by promoting kind feelings between the teacher and

yourself; and it leads often to moral good, as it elevates his motives, and awakens deep and pure sympathies in the hearts of the children.

8. The subject of holidays and vacations is too important to be passed over unnoticed. There seems in some cases to be a conflict going continually on in this matter between parent and teacher. The committee, in our public schools, stands usually between the two parties, as a mediating power. Perhaps I should add the children to the party of the teacher. But why this apparent hostility? Do we not all in reality stand on one side of the field? I have thought that parents, in most instances, need only to be enlightened, to coöperate heartily with the friends of holidays and vacations.

What does the parent desire? "Nothing," he will reply, "but the good of my child." In what, then, does that good consist? A part, and a large part certainly, of it consists in the improvement of your child's intellect. But is this the whole? Suppose him to be filled with knowledge; is nothing more desirable? To say this is to forget that he has a body, as well as a mind, to be taken care of; and it is to leave out of view, also, his moral, spiritual, and immortal nature.

Your child has a mortal frame; and so closely is it connected with his mental powers, that these cannot be truly educated except that frame be in health. "A sound mind in a sound body" was the desire

of the Roman poet; and we cannot possess a sound mind in a diseased body. If, then, you require your child to cultivate his intellect at the expense of his health, you not only rob him of all the comforts of good health, but you injure also his mind. To make a good scholar of him, you must allow him abundant exercise, and you must give him the amplest allowance of time for it. In other words, you must welcome his holidays and vacations with the same pleasure as you do his terms for study.

The age is crowding our children with new studies. Branch after branch is added to the list, and young and still younger are the scholars in our highest schools. What is the consequence? They are fast losing their health; the race, physically speaking, is on the rapid decline. Our boys are pale, puny, and feeble; round shoulders are almost universal among them. A manly, erect, well-developed frame is becoming a rare sight; and what will they be in their after life? Not vigorous, athletic men, but effeminate, weak, and degenerate in body. No influence is doing so much to hasten on this melancholy issue as that of our schools. If we will persist in forcing our children thus forward in their studies, — and I rejoice in their progress with my whole heart, if it can be made safely, — if we demand this mental progress, then, in the name of humanity, let us give their bodies a proportionate care. Let us increase their days of recreation and rest.

For the sake of their moral improvement, we should encourage liberal vacations. Unremitted study disorders the nerves, and with that disorder comes an effect on the temper and the whole character. No wonder your boy is irritable and passionate. His brain is overtasked, probably, at school, and you put no corresponding tasks on his physical frame. Your daughter is growing silent and morose, and why? She is stimulated unnaturally by her excessive studies; and her anxiety about them, and her intense application to them, are destroying her health, and, with that, her cheerfulness. You should feel, also, the need of her learning something of domestic duties. What are her prospects as a housekeeper, going on as she is in ignorance of the needle and of culinary affairs? But what can be done? She must "get her lessons," and, to do this, she must study hour after hour, and not only in school but out of school. Will you, then, complain of frequent holidays, and of too long vacations, when these are the only occasions on which she can learn anything of household duties, and be prepared to take charge of a family? I sometimes fear that the daughters now in our schools will ill supply the place of their mothers; and I am sure that abundant respite from their studies, and an increased practice of housekeeping, are all that can avert this calamity.

Our children should have long vacations, that they

may enjoy opportunities to leave their home occasionally, and mingle with the world at large. It is well that they be sometimes taken from their parents, and from the comforts and indulgences of home, that they may learn to *value* their home. A change of air and scenery is beneficial to their health. It is good, also, for their characters. Children learn much by observation; their minds are benefited by visiting new scenes; what they see when at this period produces a permanent impression; and if you send them into good society, they receive an indelible advantage.

A protracted vacation spent away from home teaches our children lessons of self-dependence. While they are at our side, they lean constantly upon us. When they are absent, they are compelled to take care of their own persons and their little affairs for themselves. They become, too, more manly and womanly by being obliged to speak, act, and think for themselves. It improves their manners, and strengthens their virtues. They learn, also, to respect, as well as to love, their parents, by being temporarily separated from them. For these and for many other reasons, if we are wise, we shall encourage teachers, and all the guardians of our schools, to appoint frequent holidays and generous vacations.

9. The school-room cannot prosper unless parents coöperate with it by joining domestic to school education. The father would have his son qualified

for business and duty in after life. Let him, then, follow his studies, and point out to him their connection with actual life. Writing, spelling, grammar, geography, arithmetic, — let him show where and how each of these is needed in the world. It will lend a wonderful charm to each of these studies. The mother can illustrate the bearing of knowledge on domestic pursuits. If the teacher be faithful, his labors reach the mental character, strengthen the judgment, and improve the taste. These qualities are called into exercise constantly at the fireside. A sagacious mother can unite her efforts, on a thousand occasions, to those of the school-room, in expanding the mind of her daughter. She can do it by direct conversation on the several branches of study. She can do it equally by calling forth indirectly, amid household avocations, the attainments of the school. So will both streams of instruction blend beautifully together, and bear their waters to the great ocean of life.

10. And thus, finally, will our children be taught that they are to pursue their studies when their school days are passed. How preposterous is the language we often hear, when a girl of sixteen says in company that "she has finished her education." Education finished! Why, what *is* education? Does it consist of a few branches of study pursued for some ten or twelve years of childhood? Nay, it is nothing less than calling forth every power, faculty, and affection of the spiritual, immortal being!

It is to have the mind filled with good knowledge, — and both vigorous and refined, — the conscience true to God and man, the heart replete with every generous feeling, and the life all directed to doing good. Has your son reached this high standard? Is your daughter thus completely educated?

Let the parent never, then, by word or act, inculcate the idea that education can be finished in the school-room. The best that can be done there is, as another has truly said, "*to show us how to learn, and inspire us with a love of improvement.*" The parent should express this great principle frequently to his children. He should enforce it by leading them to read books connected with their school studies, and binding all their knowledge fast together. It is mournful to see the boy read only the flashy productions of the day, from the moment he quits his school. It is sad to find the daughter lay aside her Chemistry, Natural Philosophy, History, Ethics, — everything, in fine, solid and improving, — and give herself up to the miserable novel, the very hour she finishes her school education. Mothers, let it not be so with your children. Cherish in them a thirst for knowledge; procure for them books both instructive and interesting. Induce them to keep fast hold of every good thing they are now learning; and thus convert childhood, youth, and age into a series of schools. So shall they be prepared for that divine school, earthly and heavenly, of which Jesus is the great Teacher and Master.

CHAPTER V.

TEACHING INSUFFICIENT. — TRAINING ESSENTIAL.

EVERY father, and every mother, if conscience be not thrice dead, must sometimes inquire, — "What shall I do for these immortal beings, whose weal or woe is to depend so almost entirely upon me?" There are some, it is true, who do not go so far in the work of education as even to ask this question. They slumber and sleep over the whole subject; and their offspring soon demonstrate the mournful truth, that "a child left to himself bringeth his parents to shame."

But this class is comparatively small. Most parents are doing something, either good or evil, for the direct moral culture of their children. They have views on this subject, and a system, which they are daily carrying into practice.

A very common system is this: to commit the entire education of a child to other persons. Some employ private teachers for the literary, and perhaps for the moral, instruction of their families; and this is all they do for them. Others, and they are the

mass, send their children to a public school. There they receive their chief, if not their only, direct tuition, whether of the mind or the heart. Others still give their children the opportunities of the Sunday school; they consign them to that, and there they expect them to begin, continue, and complete their moral and religious education. Another class, including not a few of the most intelligent and most exemplary in the community, are relying on personal instruction as the perfection of their duty in this matter. They teach their children, and that perhaps frequently and earnestly, what they ought to do; they tell them the way in which they should go, and that is with them the highest conception and the end of parental education.

To such parents I would now point out a more excellent way, and it is this: Do not rest in teaching your children the way in which they should go, but, with the wisdom of Solomon, train them up in it. See that they actually *do* what you are constantly telling them they ought to do. Never regard it as sufficient to set forth their duty in this or that particular. Nor yet be content with framing rules and laying down to them the law. This is important in its place; but it is not all you are to do. If you stop there, it is like going out in midsummer to your trellis, and saying to the vine, "Turn here," or "Turn there," and expecting that the vine will obey you. You train the vine, branch after branch, and then it grows as

you desire ; train, then, your child, in the way he should go.

This course is required by the law of the child's nature. Whatever he is to become hereafter, for that he must be prepared now. If we desire him to be physically strong in his manhood, we must help him to gain a good bodily constitution in his childhood and youth. We always train the boy for the calling of the man ; if he is to be a mechanic, he is apprenticed to that craft, and his master not only tells him how his trade must be learned, and shows him his work, but sees also that he does that work ; so is he made a skilful mechanic. Why, then, merely teach your child the way of his duty ? Why expect a youth to be perfect in morals, any more than in mechanics, unless he perform, as well as learn, what is right ? In all secular pursuits, it is our maxim that "practice makes perfect." Is the formation of character an exception to this rule ? Will a child be made good by theory alone ? Nay, theory without practice is the bane of education ; to lean, as many apparently now do, wholly upon it, is a fatal mistake.

We all know the importance of good habits. But what *is* habit ? It is a condition reached by the frequent repetition of some act. You cannot, then, teach a child good habits ; he must be trained to them ; that is, he must be required to do what is right, and to do it over and over again, until custom becomes with him a second nature. Let him stand

perfectly still while you tell him what he ought to do, and you may talk the breath out of your body before he will have a good character. You wish your daughter to be industrious ; you tell her she ought to be, but does that make her so ? Nay, it is only her doing day after day the very work you set before her that will render her industrious. The Danes, in times of yore, were accustomed to have their wealth buried with them in their graves, that their children might be obliged to labor for a subsistence. Better were it now, that the millions of the rich man were sealed up in his tomb, than left to be squandered by sons he had never trained to habits of industry and toil.

The parent often becomes the servant of his child from a mistaken kindness. He would save him from labor as a favor, and bring him up delicately and indulgently. Alas for his error ! when shall we learn that true kindness requires us to bring up our children to rely on themselves. Self-help, the habit of doing all we can for ourselves, rather than leaning upon others, is the main shaft of a good character. Better form your child to do this, than leave him the wealth of the Indies, with a feeble and indolent reliance upon you. Who has not seen the melancholy fate of those never educated to self-trust, when they left the parental roof ? Multitudes have been wrecked in the society of the vicious, through the frailty of their own principles, — a frailty which

sprung from the false kindness of those who should have trained them to self-reliance, moral firmness, and stability of character.

The child needs, what the man must have, established principles. It is far from enough to find fault with his errors, and leave him there. We must show him what is right, the broad foundations of duty; the law of God, that must be fixed in his mind. And it is to be fixed there, not by instruction alone, but by instruction and practice. A child forms a clear idea of the right only by doing what is right. He learns more by performing one good action than he can from hours of teaching unaccompanied by effort. There is no economy of means in education like practice. We wear ourselves out in giving children lectures on good conduct, when a single act of virtue on their part would do more for them than all our words. Instruction is needed, is essential, but practice is still more so. You have, perhaps, a little girl, whom you would render benevolent; lead her to some poor family, and let her there see the misery of poverty, and then go home and save all she can of her own small fund, and give to that family. You will in this way imprint on her mind a lesson of charity that books, stories, descriptions, and mere personal exhortations, could never have imparted. The germ of a true Christian, second only to the love of God, is self-sacrifice. Whatever, therefore, you can do to encourage that

spirit in your child, through his own actions, — suppose it be by receiving and thanking him for the least gift, or by the least voluntary denial on his part of his own appetites, or suppression of his selfish desires, — makes you his unspeakable benefactor.

The vital difference between teaching and training is illustrated by the habit of truthfulness. Every parent inculcates the importance of truth ; but it is not seldom done through words alone. The little child is credulous ; he believes everything said by his father and mother. His conception of absolute truth is derived from this source. What an influence is here ! How solicitous should these parents be that their child never have cause to lose his confidence in their veracity ! How should they guard against the least word which may bring it into suspicion ! That parent who deceives his child is, in reality, his worst foe ; he breaks the silver cord of trust in his heart. You can render a little one no greater injury, none more fatal to all that is purest and noblest within him, than to add aught to the truth, or take anything from it, knowingly, in your intercourse with him. For, " if father does it," argues the child, " then it must be right ; if mother says what is not quite true, what harm can there be in it ? "

And the great danger lies in trifling deviations from the truth. A gross falsehood repels a child by its enormity ; but a little untruth he can learn to pass over as innocent. Sometimes the parent teach-

es truth, yet practises uttering these slight untruths. His child does the same, and it passes unreproved; he is insensibly trained to do the very opposite of what he is taught. Dr. Johnson said, that if a child affirmed that he saw a thing out of one window, when in reality he saw it out of another, he ought to be punished for it. It is more, doubtless, from carelessness about truth in small matters, than from intentional lying, that there is so much falsehood in the world. On this account a child should be educated to a strict regard for truth in the smallest things. You do not know where the slightest deviation from truth may finally lead him.

There is a habit of exaggeration in some families, which is fraught with untruth. They apply the strongest epithet to every trivial subject. "This man is splendid; that man is a wretch; the bread is elegant; the water is detestable." Every person and every thing is in the extreme. Repress this pernicious habit in your children; show them its fatal tendency as a corrupter of the truth. Do not allow them to go into raptures about a mere dish on the table, or an article of dress. Keep them to the truth, and keep yourself, also, to it; there is no subject where preaching without practice produces less profit than on this. Govern your lips and restrain your feelings, and shun exaggeration as a moral poison.

"But are there not occasions," you may ask,

"when a parent cannot adhere to the literal truth?" I answer, that, in nearly every instance where the right is claimed to falsify or prevaricate to children, there is no need of practising deception. We may, and we sometimes must, decline answering their questions; but to give an answer we know to be wrong is never required of or permitted in us. Better be silent, and determinately refuse any reply to a child's question, better do anything, than tell him a direct falsehood.

A prolific source of untruth in children is fear. They dare not, in many cases, speak the truth, and expose their own misdeeds, through fear of punishment. But were it not better to remit the penalty of an offence, than encourage deception? I would pardon almost any error in a child, were he only true in his confessions. Confession, I know, may become a habit, and thus make the occasions for it frequent. But no evil of this kind can counterbalance the terrible evils of a habit of deceit and untruth.

Teach your children to discern the truth clearly, and to speak it boldly. The young easily perceive what is right, just, and true; they are quick to detect falsity, and they have a natural love of the truth. The habit of lying is always an acquired one. Did parents train their children anxiously and vigilantly to avoid every shade of falsehood, in their speech and their conduct, — to follow the dictates of their own hearts and their own consciences, instead of do

ing like others, — they would continue, as in infancy, so in childhood, youth, and age, to love and cling to the simple truth. Keep the fountain pure, and the streams will then be pure.

Our children will never be fixed in the habit of truthfulness until we regard it ourselves as the very aorta of their moral education. We must see and feel that it is the main artery, through which alone their spiritual life-blood can flow. I would that our Christian mothers gave this virtue the prominence given to it by a heathen mother in Africa. Mr. Park relates that a party of Moors attacked the flocks of an African village, in which he was stopping, and that a youth of the place was mortally wounded in the affray. The natives placed him on horseback and led him home, while his mother preceded the train, and spoke of the virtues of her boy; and, with clasped hands and streaming eyes, she showed the bitterness of her grief. But the great quality, which she most of all praised in him, was expressed in these touching words: — "*He never, never, never told a lie.*"

A prevalent vice of our times, one which is evidently increasing in our cities and populous towns, is profane speaking. Many of our boys are falling into this habit, and the evil is the more to be dreaded from its subtle approach. No child becomes suddenly profane; he begins with using strong epithets, perhaps words that sound like those used by

the swearer. He goes on, step by step, until his mouth becomes polluted with the foulest language. Little children sometimes think it smart and manly to imitate their seniors' profanity ; but they always do it by degrees. How shall the parent prevent this pernicious practice ?

It is well to teach children the sinfulness of profane speaking, and warn them of the dangers of all language that may lead to it. But beyond that, we must also train them to a perfect purity of speech. Never permit any word of asseveration to become habitual with your child. "Darn" is not "damn," and yet it is kindred to it, and the use of the one may easily slide into that of the other. It does no good to break out continually with "Gracious !" "Conscience !" "By George !" nor by any one else. If you allow these expressions in the boy, the man, perhaps the youth even, may think them too tame, and proceed to the strong language of direct oaths. Check every propensity of this kind in the bud. If you smile at this practice, — and I have known some parents who even thought it sounded brave in their little son to swear, and many I know who laugh at their by-words as "cunning," — if you smile now, you may yet weep at the result of the habit you encourage. The only safe course lies in total abstinence from all language that is kindred to oaths, in keeping your child free from every impure word, let it be profane, or vulgar, or obscene, or in any wise tending to pollute his spirit.

Children should be taught that many little acts, unimportant in themselves, become all-important by laying the foundation of a habit. Plato reproved a boy for his manner of play at some childish game. "You blame me," said the boy, "for a very little thing." "Custom," replied Plato, "is no little thing." A child is sometimes praised for cheating his playfellow in a sly manner; the act seems a trifle, yet it will lead, — if you do not check it, still more if you commend it, — it will lead to a habit of deception in his whole future life. The mother is amused to see her little boy stone the birds, or kill harmless insects; but that very smile encourages in her child a spirit that will terminate, perhaps, in deeds of tyranny and cruelty at which she would shudder. Girls often take pleasure in teasing a cat; but they may, by this little act, acquire the elements of an imperious and domineering disposition. Your son speaks to a domestic in tones which qualify him to become the unfeeling master, perhaps the willing slaveholder. It is a small thing in a boy to destroy his little brother's or sister's plaything; it is not, however, a small thing to oppress a poor man, to lord it over our inferiors, and to make vassals of those who serve us; and all these are the legitimate fruits of early cruelty to those younger and weaker than ourselves.

"Of what consequence," it may be asked, "is it what food a child takes, or what garments you

procure for him, so he is but made happy ?" None at all, I answer, if you leave out of sight the law of habit. But when you think of this law, you will not allow him to pass by the bread, and make his whole meal of cake. For soon he will destroy his appetite for simple food, and with it his health may be impaired, and his very life, perhaps, at last sacrificed. Besides, it is unkind to a child to bring him up in dainty habits. Encourage in your children simple tastes, a love of plain food, and of a merely neat dress. Do this on principle, whatever may be your circumstances in life ; for then, if they are hereafter needy, they will be content with a lot for which you have so well prepared them. If, on the other hand, they are rich, they will the more enjoy their wealth, and the luxuries it procures for them, from the contrast of their abundance with the frugal habits of their early days.

For the same reasons, I would encourage refined manners, not only in society, but in the bosom of the family. " Why do this among those who know each other so well ?" you may ask. I reply, if they are gentle and respectful at home, they will surely be so abroad. To thank others for favors, when we are accustomed to thank husband or wife, father and mother, brothers and sisters, every day, becomes easy, almost unavoidable. Let there be politeness at your own table, and your children will show it everywhere else. If it be assumed only on certain occasions,

their manner will be stiff and embarrassed ; but let it be common every hour, and at every meeting in the family circle, and you will see in them at all times the true gentleman and the true lady.

By politeness I do not mean artificial, still less affected, manners. It is not Chesterfield, but Paul, I would set up as a model in this respect. "Whatsoever things are lovely" are closely connected with "whatsoever things are of good report." Teach your children gentle manners, and you do much to give them kind feelings. "St. Paul," it was once said, "was a finished gentleman." This is true ; he had a benevolent heart, and a great knowledge of human nature, and these two things are the basis of genuine politeness. A child, by being courteous to his parents, gains an insight of other persons' feelings, and he also acquires the habit of consulting other persons' happiness. Let your daughter be civil to brother and sister, or let your son be gentle to every inmate of your family, and they will become so to all out of the family. Christian politeness will then be with them "a second nature."

I know of no better illustration of the power of right training than its effect on a child's control of his apprehensions and fears. Some mothers tremble and betray terror at the approach of a thunder-storm ; so, uniformly, do their daughters. The mother screams at the sight of a snake or a toad ; the little

child at her side echoes that scream. Is the horse in the carriage restive? The mother cries out for fright, and each girl and boy learns soon to cry still louder. And who has not seen the almost miraculous influence, on the other hand, of composure in danger, and the expression of reliance upon our Father in heaven, as it is caught from a mother's lips and eye? In this age of weak nerves, it is of the last importance that our children be guarded, both by precept and example, against the fears of imagination. We should form the habit, even in the infant, of self-possession. It is hardly too much to recommend the course which Montaigne tells us his father pursued with him, from his earliest years. "Some," says he, "being of opinion it troubles and disturbs the brains of children suddenly to wake them in the morning, and to snatch them violently and over-hastily from sleep (wherein they are much more profoundly involved than we), he caused me to be waked by the sound of some musical instrument, and was never unprovided of a musician for that purpose." Let us spare no reasonable efforts to fortify the nerves of our children. Nothing is better for this purpose than inducing them — and I would even do it by authority, if it could not be done otherwise — to take physical exercise in the open air, when neither their amusements nor their occupation lead to it. The effect of this practice on their mind and character, as well as on their bodily health, will be seen through their whole lives.

Closely connected with this topic is that of educating our children in habits of industry. It is not enough to talk earnestly against idleness ; we must see that they are actually not idle. For the sake of health, let them never contract habits of indolence. A child should be taught the necessity of employing every part of his nature diligently and in earnest. "Nine tenths of the miseries and vices of manhood proceed," says Carlyle, "from idleness." This is a strong statement, but I believe it to be true. What more wretched than the feeling that one has absolutely nothing to do ? "When I rise in the morning," observes some old writer, "if I can think of anything to do, if it is but the plucking of a rose, I am happy." Labor should be represented to the young as a blessing, and constant, useful occupation should be shown, both by precept and example, to be the truest happiness.

Idleness is a prolific parent of the vices. Nothing is more dangerous to the character of children than to allow them to remain unemployed. If they are not doing good, they will certainly do evil ; if their thoughts are not directed to profitable topics, they will roam upon all that is ensnaring and corrupt. Leave them to themselves, and you are sowing those seeds which spring up in vanity and folly, if haply they do not yield a fearful harvest at the haunts of dissipation, intemperance, gambling, shame, and ruin. Teach, as far as possible, useful occupations ;

but, rather than permit your son to be idle, set him to removing a pile of stones from one end to the other of your garden. Keep your daughter employed, — always excepting a liberal allowance of time for recreation, — keep her busy. Better knit what you know must be all unravelled, better anything that is harmless, than that she form the habit of sitting, hour after hour, perfectly idle. I would have a child's conscience so educated that he should regard the waste of time as a sin, like dishonesty or untruth. To how many sins, indeed, does it inevitably lead !

Whatever, in short, we may teach or tell our children about their various duties, let us not stop there. Instruction may succeed in forming a good character, but how often does it fall short of it ! We see the well-informed prove inefficient, and the good scholar make an indolent, a wayward, or a passionate and self-willed man. The great evil in the moral world is, that, while we know what is right, we fail to perform it. Knowledge is good, but principle, firmness of purpose, benevolence, and well-doing are immeasurably better. Intelligence is to be desired ; so also, and far beyond it in value, is virtue ; and the only sure link between the understanding and the heart and the life is that which is forged in the fires of early culture. Knowledge is being poured into the mind from a thousand fountains ; — books, conversation, teachers, experience, all life, in one word, are

daily adding to its stores. But character is formed by a single process alone. On the quiet grounds of the individual soul, silently and slowly, must this temple of God be erected. Gold, silver, and precious stones are all that may enter into the structure. Blessed is that parent whose child bears the marks of this divine workmanship !

" Train up a child in the way he should go." How wide is the scope of this precept ! It goes beyond all formal instructions, all set speeches and lectures to the young, and embraces the entire experience of that God-appointed institution, the family. We train our children, let it also be remembered, by the general tone of our own conversation, by the spirit we indulge and the feelings we cherish, and by our air and manner ; these constitute the basis of parental education. What we do casually, and without any immediate intention of influencing our children, is the great moulding power of our household. We may teach what we please ; but that alone will not decide the character of these little ones. It is what we do and say, nay, what we think and feel, in our inmost soul, that accomplishes the larger part of this mighty work. The state of our heart, our affection for God and man, or our habitual indifference to eternal things, and our inbred selfishness, — these are what train our children. We cannot seal up this inner fountain ; its waters, if they do not gush forth openly, will yet ooze out,

and will fall on the minds and hearts of our offspring, either to blight them, like the pestilential miasma, or, like the dews and showers of heaven, to freshen them and quicken them to an unfading verdure.

The necessity of training children, as well as teaching them, is inculcated constantly in the Scriptures. The command is to "bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." This involves far more than merely telling them how they ought to be brought up. It involves a reciprocal duty on the part of the child. "Children, obey your parents in all things," — so runs the Divine command. Obedience, then, is indispensable to a Christian education. Accordingly, the parent must not only frame rules for the government of his family, but those rules must be enforced. The authority vested in him by God is not to lie dormant, but with calmness and in love it must be steadily exercised.

CHAPTER VI.

OBEDIENCE.

THE foundation of all excellence of character consists in obedience. He who has never learned to yield to authority as authority, that is, to give up his own will to a higher power, and to do it quietly, meekly, with an unquestioning spirit, has made little progress as a moral and spiritual being. The basis of civil society consists in this principle; without it, government, law, order, nay, society itself, could not exist a single day. We live under the laws of God and nature; take away obedience to them, let every one do as he pleases, and resist whatever laws he dislikes or cannot understand, and chaos and confusion would fill the universe; again would the earth be without form and void, and again darkness be on the face of the deep. There is a moral law, written on our inner members, and we are compelled to obey it. If we deny its authority, and resist its mandates, we cannot escape the penalty. To do right is obedience, and it is, therefore, to be happy; to do wrong is disobedience, and it is to bring inev-

itably on ourselves more or less suffering. So, too, there is a physical law ; we can prolong our lives, and continue in health, only on certain conditions, — conditions which we have no choice in observing. He who persists in disobeying the authority of God, as expressed through the laws of the body, must reap the consequences of his conduct, in the form of sickness and death.

Constituted as we thus are, compelled through our lives to submit to authority, it becomes important that we learn this lesson in our earliest childhood. The fact should be impressed on the very infant, that he has no alternative but obedience ; the sooner he is taught this, the kinder is his discipline. To neglect it can proceed only from a mistaken fondness ; for what is it but to encourage in him a disposition to resistance and disobedience in general, — a spirit which must cause him disappointment and pain in all subsequent years ? If he is trained, on the other hand, to obey now, then will he submit easily and cheerfully to law in every form. He will respect the laws of the land, and make a good citizen and a genuine patriot. He will obey the laws of his physical frame, and, so far as depends on himself, will possess good health and enjoy a long life. He will submit to the moral law, obey God and his conscience, advance in spiritual excellence, and be an honor and a blessing to his race, and an heir of Heaven.

Every one must have noticed that children like to be commanded, provided always it be done in the right manner. The love of law is inherent in the human heart; order, system, regularity, are agreeable to our nature. We are fond of subordination, and we yield the tribute of submission to authority with cheerfulness, if we have not been provoked to anger. "When," in the language of another, "a child is brought to exercise a spirit of true and loving submission to the good law of his parents, what will you see, many times, but a look of childish joy, and a happy sweetness of manner, and a ready delight in authority?"

Now, whose is the duty of imprinting on the young mind this great doctrine of obedience? It belongs, in part, to every teacher and every guardian of our youth. No opportunity should be lost of instructing, and, what is far more important, of training, the child early to obey. But at the head of all teachers and guardians, in this respect, stands the parent. To his hands the little one is specially committed; his, before all other beings, is the duty, and his the responsibility, of securing the habit of uniform, implicit obedience. If a daughter be allowed in habitual disrespect to her mother, it is vain to call on her teacher, or any agency whatever abroad, to supply the melancholy deficiency at home. Let the son grow up contemning the authority of his father, and no earthly being can implant in him the seeds of

a modest, unquestioning respect for any will or any power but his own.

The truth of our position is sustained by the Scriptures. Both the Old and the New Testament require children to obey. But whom must they obey? Their parents. "Honor thy father and thy mother," is the first commandment, and it is attended, by way of eminence, "with promise." Terrible is the retribution of filial disobedience. "The eye that mocketh at his father, and despiseth to obey his mother, the ravens of the valley shall pick it out, and the young eagles shall eat it." Among the praises of Abraham, as expressed by Jehovah himself, is this: — "For I know him, that he will command his children after him." The book of Proverbs is replete with instruction to parents. "Chasten thy son while there is hope." "A child left to himself bringeth his mother to shame." "Correct thy son, and he shall give thee rest; yea, he shall give delight unto thy soul." "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it." Observe this word, *train*; it is not said, *tell* him the way, and then leave him to take it or not, as he chooses, but "train" him, that is, *require* him to take it. The law of obedience was not repealed by the Gospel; on the contrary, it was expressly confirmed by it. "Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right." Paul, in his Epistle to the Colos-

sians, writes thus : — " Children, obey your parents in all things, for this is well pleasing unto the Lord." " Ye fathers, bring up your children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." That is, educate them as the Lord God requires of you. So is it manifest that no parent who recognizes the authority of revelation can fail of exacting from his child a uniform obedience to his commands.

And not only through the Scriptures, but by the discipline of our lives, the Great Father of mankind is teaching the doctrine before us. He provides for our wants, but in what manner ? Only in conformity with certain laws ; which laws, to secure the supply of our wants, we must steadily obey. He gives us our daily bread ; yet only on condition we labor for it. He commands us to work, and tells us continually, " If any man will not work, neither shall he eat." What are our trials, crosses, pains, and griefs, but so many distinct calls to obey Him who appoints them ? He sends sickness on those who are dear to us. Perhaps the very arm on which the family leans for subsistence is stricken with disease, and made helpless. Why does God deal thus with us ? We know not ; but this we do know, one thing alone we can do, and that is, *submit* to his decree. Our loved ones waste away with lingering illness ; day after day, their strength fails ; and every hour the dread issue is drawing nigh. Soon — O, how soon does it seem ! — all is over ;

our fondest hopes concerning them are crushed, and the most blooming and most trusted in of all, it may be, is called away. The high Sovereign, in whose hands we lie, perhaps, repeats the sad stroke. The young, the old, — hearts knit with our own, loved faces, venerated forms, — one by one, and in how quick succession, he touches them, and they are gone. How can we bear these dark visitations? What can reconcile us to this dreary lot? One thought alone. It is that God commands, and therefore must we obey; it is a Father's will, irresistible, and in that view awful, yet as gentle as it is decided, and therefore do we at last, with a meek resignation, yield to it in submission.

The earthly parent must obey the mandates of Heaven, and he is to look up and take pattern from this divine model. As we are often called to surrender our judgment, and bow to that of God, so the child must bow; he must do and bear what his reason cannot yet fathom, because it is the will of a father or a mother. In many events which we cannot fathom, the Sovereign of the universe is saying to us, — "What I do thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter." So says the parent to his child, and this must suffice him; in his tender years he must obey, — obey even where the command seems dark to unreasonableness. He is never to resist, except where his conscience is violated, and the authority of father and mother is overruled by the distinct and majestic voice of God.

Obedience is required by the superiority of the parent. Wherever human beings are placed together, there must be order, and order cannot be secured without discipline, subordination, and authority. We live in a social state, in a community, and under a government. But no government can be sustained without obedience to superiors. Let every man make a constitution for himself, and take the laws into his own hand, and civil society is at once overthrown. Now, home is a society ; it demands some controlling power, and that power must be exercised. But where shall it be lodged ? God has decided this question. He has placed the father and the mother as the united head of the home society. And it is not only their right, but their bounden duty, to maintain their authority. Their children come to them ignorant, inexperienced, and helpless ; and they can receive the benefit of the superior knowledge and wisdom and experience of their parents in no possible manner except by unhesitating obedience. Through infancy, childhood, and youth, — so long, indeed, as they remain in a state of pupilage, — they must look up to these two beings for the law of their lives.

The basis, I remark next, of some of the noblest and some of the purest traits in the character is laid by the quality in question. " The consciousness of the superiority of others is a good feeling in youth, as at all ages, for it elevates the ideal standard to which

we aspire; while self-confidence in youth is an overweening insolence toward time and nature. If the feeling of the superiority of others is a delusion, it is a delusion which raises human nature, and is better than that which lowers it." You desire to see your child respectful, self-controlled, and of a teachable and a loving temper. You wish him to be modest, humble, and grateful. But you can expect in him no one of these dispositions, if he is habitually disobedient to you. Hophni and Phineas hearkened not to the voice of their father Eli, but spurned his authority. And what was the consequence? They were sons of Belial, and in one day both came to a miserable death. Such is, in all ages, the fruit of filial disobedience. The child who is allowed to trample on or disregard the will of a parent never learns to control his own will. He is the victim of passion, turbulence, or caprice. He has no respect for his seniors and superiors. He thinks no one can teach him, and he has no steady affection, not even for those at his own fireside. He is moodish, fitful, impatient, ill-humored. How different the child who is trained to a quiet, unquestioning obedience! Such a one, controlled by another, learns easily to control himself. Respectful to father and mother, he is so to all others; he is mild, teachable, and gentle, while he is also full of energy and activity. The daughter, who is deferential to her parents, is found to respect her teachers, to be modest, humble, kind, and grateful.

So powerful is the effect of obedience on the character, that we often see those who in childhood were subjected to the unreasonable commands and the harsh treatment of intemperate parents, and were forced by terror to obey, in after life become men of great worth, showing extraordinary power of self-control, and enjoying the respect and confidence of their fellow-men. Who can doubt that such persons often owe their character and standing to the habit of instant obedience acquired in early life under their severe and undesirable discipline? This result is a compensation in part for the sad lot of being trained by vicious parents. Show me a single instance where the higher moral qualities grow on the same stock with habitual disobedience to parents in childhood, and I will yield the point, and confess that men may "gather grapes of thorns, and figs of thistles."

Let it not be thought I advocate a system of sternness and severity, and that the course recommended would alienate a child's affections. This is not true; children have by nature a sense of justice, and a love of order. They do not dislike authority, but see at once its reasonableness. Only let your government be steady, uniform, consistent, and you will find little disposition to resist it. Doubtless there may be a rigid, tyrannical discipline, and a relentless use of the rod, which shall repel a child from its parent, and make his image, through life,

one of terror instead of love. But is this inseparable from the exercise of parental authority? Shall we never lay a command, lest we forfeit a child's love? Such is not the law of God.

To say that the exercise of authority leads of necessity to sternness, and prevents that tender and confiding spirit which should exist in this relation, is to impeach the Author of revelation. For parents are required by the Bible to bring their children up in the nurture of the Lord. This they cannot do without obedience on the part of their children. But does God require of the father and mother to do what cannot be done without alienating their offspring, and destroying their love?

That the affection of the child is sometimes chilled by the exercise of parental authority, I admit; but it is not because, from the nature of the case, it always must be so. No, the evil lies here: we issue our commands with wrong motives and feelings. Perhaps we do it in a dictatorial temper, or with caprice. Not unfrequently it is done in a tone and with a spirit contrary to that prescribed by the Apostle. "Fathers," said he, "provoke not your children to anger." The parent who governs his child in anger is quite sure to excite *his* anger, and so to impair his affection; but, on the other hand, he whose authority is as calm and gentle as it is decided and firm will not quench, but increase, the love of his child.

It is, then, a grievous error to imagine a child cannot be controlled without the sacrifice of his affections. Nay, it is not authority, it is indulgence, which, in the long term of years, alienates and renders children hard-hearted and unfeeling. In the language of one of our most experienced and successful teachers, — "It is among the mysteries of human nature, that indulgence never awakens gratitude or love in the heart of a child. The child who is most indulged is uniformly most ungrateful, most selfish, most unconcerned about the happiness of father and mother." Is it indeed so? Then, for his own sake, no less than for his child's, the wise parent will shun the rock of undue indulgence. He will be considerate in his demands; he will make few rules, and those only that are good and just; and then, with a kind spirit, joined to a firm manner, he will see that they are invariably obeyed. "Kind, yet firm," — be that our rule, and we shall not lose, but increase, the regard and love of our children.

"That law shall tame the fiercest, bring down the battlements of pride,
Cherish the weak, control the strong, and win the fearful spirit."

To govern a child thus firmly and happily is indeed no easy task. It is far easier to let him do as he pleases, or, on the other extreme, to rule him with a rod of iron. But, though difficult, it is not impossible. No; would the parent but begin early,

and use the rein, instead of the whip, for discipline, he would find his success morally certain. It is an error of many mothers to put off the period of authority till its exercise is too late for effect. The little one is so young they cannot bear to cross it; its freaks of temper, or little acts of deception and evasions of authority, perhaps, create only a smile. "By and by," says the mother, "I shall correct these things." Alas, how many thus foster the serpent that afterward stings their own bosom! The child is obstinate; the mother gives way. "It is not time," she says to herself, "yet; I cannot think so soon of breaking the dear one's will"; — and so he is left to himself till the sturdy, self-willed boy at last, perhaps, breaks her heart. Were it not easier and happier far, looking at the issue, to have controlled this little one from his very cradle?

Great harm often comes from allowing our children to object and argue against our commands. Some will not give an order, lest it subject them to a long course of debating, and demurring, and reasoning, troublesome to themselves and degrading to their authority. Others think we should allow and encourage our children to argue with us about everything we require of them. To silence their questionings, in any instance, seems to such persons harsh. But if the child is to stand on a level with the parent, then what is his authority? Can we reason against a law of the State, and make our argu

ments a good ground for its violation? May we argue down a command of God? "These commands," you may reply, "are all reasonable." So are those of a wise parent. But we cannot, certainly, understand every case in which we are obliged to submit to our Father in heaven. Many, too, must obey the constitution and the laws without being satisfied with them. So must the child obey its parent, — obey without murmuring or questioning, — simply because he or she *is* a parent. To allow him to substitute his own conviction for our command, is to break down all parental government. To listen to the plea, that we infringe his personal liberty, is a fatal mistake. To encourage either son or daughter in the idea, that obedience is mean and degrading, is giving countenance to a mournful error. Obedience degrading! Nay, what more honorable? What truer than the exhortation of the king of Israel: — "My son, hear the instruction of thy father, and forsake not the law of thy mother; for they shall be an ornament of grace unto thy head, and chains about thy neck"?

A command, I repeat, is to be obeyed because it *is* a command, given by one clothed with a divine authority. Let the mother show her very infant that his will must yield to hers. As he advances in years, the father also should exact an unquestioning obedience. We look back on our childhood, and see, that, in a multitude of instances, what appeared

to us at that time the arbitrary commands of a stern, perhaps even of a selfish, father, were in truth the very opposite of this ; they were dictated by love for us, and a regard to our highest good. We should mourn now, had we not then been constrained to obedience. Every wise parent acts with this view in his mind. No change of times, no mistaken remission of authority by other parents, will induce him to yield his authority, and become the servant, instead of the master, of his child.

If it be asked whether you are never to explain yourself to your child, and never allow him to argue in regard to your commands, I would say, surely you are. But when, or to what degree, you shall do it, must not be left to the judgment of your child, but depend on your own best wisdom. You may sometimes mistake, and defer less to his views than his age and capacities would render proper. If so, it is his misfortune ; it is not your fault, if you have been calm and deliberate in your command, and have sought to do precisely right. The difficulty commonly is, that children, when allowed to hesitate before obeying their parents, soon become imperious and unreasonable in their expectations, and finally set up their sophistry and their pride, if not the force of their will, in opposition to parental authority. Therefore is it essential, when wrong views or feelings are manifested, to end the discussion by a mild but firm exercise of that ultimate power which is vested in you alone.

CHAPTER VII.

CORPORAL PUNISHMENT.

But how can the parent secure uniform obedience? Suppose a child resists our authority,—shall we, after trying all other methods without success, resort at last to corporal punishment? Not if there be any possible means of avoiding it. You may say you have tried everything else; but are you sure this is true? Have you exhausted all the powers of persuasion? Have you been calm, persevering, and patient in the use of every experiment? It may be asked why I put these questions. Why not at once allow the rod to be employed? I answer, that, in point of fact, the rod is seldom so used as to do any permanent good. Children are not whipped, I presume, in one out of a hundred cases, calmly, without anger, and with manifest grief. It is, therefore, a terrible hazard to allow yourself in the use of the rod.

Then, again, the more the experiment is tried, in families and in schools, of dispensing entirely with corporal punishment, the greater is the success that

attends it. Parents and teachers may find it difficult to lay aside the rod, where children are accustomed to it; but let any one begin with relying wholly on moral influences, and he will seldom fail with any child or in any school. It is hard to govern a boy at twelve without the rod, if he has been governed up to that period by it. But take the little child, the infant, I would say, and require him from the first to yield his will to yours, and I believe you need never afterward resort to corporal punishment.

Is not the use of the rod a violation of the laws of nature? I know of no instance in which the Creator punishes a merely moral offence by physical retribution. If I eat to excess, my body is made to suffer for the sin; but if I utter a falsehood, an offence which is only mental and moral, my mind, and not my body, is punished for that offence. Why, then, strike a child for a wrong done in his mind or heart only? If we follow the example of the Supreme Parent, we shall punish such offences, as He does, in that part of the child's nature where the offence was committed.

I do not deny, that, through the errors of the past, we may sometimes be compelled to practise this violation of the Divine laws. One wrong step, in the beginning of a child's education, prepares the way for many subsequent steps, that can be justified only in consequence of that early error. In large schools the rod may be sometimes necessary; to avoid it,

our schools must be made smaller. In the family, the cases are very rare, I think, in which moral means will not suffice to secure uniform obedience. Where the number to be governed is few, there is time for a steady personal influence over each child. Great as the evils of insubordination are, they seem to me less than the fearful consequences that flow from the habitual use of the rod. Not a few children have been maimed for life, an innumerable company have been morally maimed, by corporal punishment administered by the ignorant, the intemperate, the arbitrary, and the passionate.

It is admitted that the domestic animals can usually be better governed by kindness than by force. In one community the ox is driven by the goad, in another the whip is found to suffice. We often see anecdotes of the horse resisting blows and violence, and yet being easily subdued by a kind voice and the stroke of a gentle hand. Let it not be contended that human nature is less easily controlled than that of the brutes. I have no fear that any parent will fail of governing his child by gentle means from the hour when he has a steady *faith in the omnipotence of love, and acts in obedience to that faith.*

Many parents whip their children, to save themselves trouble. No doubt it is easier to do this than to reason and expostulate with them. The rod is a summary method of correction; you have but to strike a few blows, and that ends the whole matter.

If done with excitement, it gratifies the feeling of the moment, and hence passion is sometimes pleased with the arguments for force. Time, also, is saved by it, and "who would spend an hour in reasoning with his child, when a few blows occupy but a minute?" This is sad philosophy, and worse religion. All who punish with these views and feelings sin against the nature of childhood. Instead of calling forth its best propensities, they stimulate its very worst ones. The anger of the parent begets anger in his child. You cannot strike a blow in selfishness without your child perceiving it. And the moment he sees your motive, his temper is roused, he is filled with bitterness toward you, and the chance is, you are making him revengeful for life.

As regards the time required for moral influence, I would ask the parent for what time is given him, if not to educate his children in the best possible manner? Better neglect your business than neglect them; better they should live on a crust, and wear the meanest apparel, than, for the sake of furnishing them dainty food and costly dresses, beat them with a rod to save time for making money. If indolence be the motive, as I fear it often is, then is there still less excuse for clinging to this relic of barbarism. That parent is a monster, who, to spare himself a little effort, takes a course which tends to brutalize his children. Whatever may be said of the need of the rod in some cases, it can never be justified as a means of helping a sluggard father or mother.

Corporal punishment might soon be suppressed, did parents make it their constant care to render it unnecessary. Begin with your child in the cradle, and govern him by gentle methods. Do not accustom him to being shaken or slapped every hour in the day. You can so train him, that violence will never be necessary. It is possible "to guide with a look, to reward with a smile, and to punish with a frown." You may thus keep the heart so susceptible, that, in after years, words will govern more effectually than blows. And, before your children leave the paternal threshold, you will find nothing is needed with them beyond "reasonable expostulation, mild rebuke, tender reproof, appeals, in one word, to their understanding and feelings and conscience."

To hasten forward this desirable consummation, we should forbear threatening. It is probably even worse for a child's moral nature to be accustomed to constant threats of the rod, than to be occasionally punished with it. This course either hardens his feelings or renders him peevish, passionate, and timid. You are to excite a fear of doing wrong, not a fear of punishment. The former motive strengthens good principles; the latter, in its excess, always debilitates the character. Then, too, a child soon loses all respect for the parent who threatens without ever executing his threats. You may talk long and frequently about what you shall "certainly" do if an offence is repeated, but your child does not be-

lieve you. He will laugh at your language, the moment his back is turned. In vain will you hang up a rod in sight; he soon learns that it is done with no purpose whatever of using it upon him, and it awakens ridicule instead of terror.

Great harm is often done by punishing a child in presence of others. The gallows is now, in many cases, concealed from the public; so should the act of whipping be concealed from a family of children. If it must be done, let it take place with the utmost privacy. This principle should be carried out, I think, in all methods of correction. If you talk severely to one child in presence of another, it always does harm. Most children are fond of seeing the faults of others exposed and corrected. But this is an unchristian spirit; it often fosters pride, retaliation, unfriendly and selfish feelings, to witness the punishment of another. It teaches children to find fault with each other, and excites an arbitrary, domineering temper in the older ones. Let your discipline of each child in your family be as little seen by the rest as possible. Praise will frequently excite the envy of the others, and censure will be eagerly responded to and confirmed by them. It arouses, too, a spirit of self-justification, to be blamed before others, and thus the subject of the correction is made worse by it, no less than the spectators.

Obedience must be secured, but let us see that it is done in the right method. Be sure a child under-

stands your command before you rebuke him for disobedience. Small children sometimes fail to get the meaning of our language, and so appear to resist our authority when they really do not. A child is engrossed in his play; he does not hear your command, or he is not sure you are in earnest; he therefore waits a moment, and looks in your face. Do not punish him until you are certain he means to disobey you. And when a little girl is angry, let not her mother take that moment to require some task that is likely to cause resistance. Let her wait, if possible, until the child is calm. All censures and chastisements should be imposed at a favorable moment. We should do nothing unnecessarily to thwart, and irritate, and awaken opposition to our authority.

The efficacy of parental discipline depends very much on the time when it is administered. The hour before sleep will be found favorable, in most cases, to admonition and reproof. Then the passions are hushed, no temptations are nigh, the ear is open, and the feelings are usually tender. At the breakfast-table, also, the mind is calm and the heart impressible. This period has been recommended as friendly to the restoration of the erring. "If," says another, "one has any soft and silken ties, which mothers weave and sisters strengthen, and all the chaste associations of a parent's roof yet further wind around the heart, linking the cradle with the

grave, — the morning is the season in which they put forth all their strength ; the excitement of the noonday, and the riot of the night, may try them hard, and seem to part them ; still on the daily drama of life sleep timely lets fall the curtain, and all the virtues the profligate would have murdered, reviving with the morning sun, send a thrill through the breast, and instinctively whisper, — 'It is not too late to be wise.'" Let not this hint be lost upon us, especially in our management of children, who, either from the excitableness of their temperament, or their natural stubbornness, are difficult to be governed.

The control of the temper is an invaluable quality. But it requires great wisdom to promote it in a child. He should not be punished for every fretful expression. "Soothing words, an embrace, a new and pleasant object of attention, will often suppress rising irritability." Watch your child, and keep out of his way, as far as you can, temptations to anger. It is wrong to inflict a blow on the first impulse you feel to do it. Better spare the blow, and resort to a gentler discipline. You can take away a plaything, confine your child to a room by himself, or to the house in pleasant weather, or keep him from the table, or from the society of his companions. Do not, however, under any circumstances, confine him in a dark or lonely place, where superstitious fears will be awakened. Let his punishment be moderate, just, and salutary.

In all cases we should strive to look with lenity at the misdemeanours of our children. Let us consider that they *are* children, and not men and women. This will lead us to excuse many things we should otherwise punish. They cannot see and feel, as we do, the importance of perfect conduct. Their youth renders them restless and fickle ; let us not exact from them the sobriety and stability of their elders. They do not, perhaps, comprehend the rules of propriety as we do ; why, then, punish them for every slight violation of those rules ? Their feelings are ardent and quick, and this leads them to say and do many things which, in our sedateness, we may think inexcusable. But is not this light-heartedness, with all the errors it occasions, preferable to precocity ? Childhood is the work of God, and let us give it free scope ; let us not make it stiff, formal, and dull to stupidity.

We are apt to think children have no desire, of themselves, for improvement. This, I am persuaded, is unjust judgment. Most of them wish to do well ; they have an habitual desire to cultivate their minds, enlarge their affections, and obey their conscience. But they are easily excited by temptation, and therefore, in their haste, sometimes commit faults. Let not all these faults be set down as deliberate offences. We live in an age of excitement, and there is much around us to aggravate the susceptibilities of childhood. Many of the present faults

of children spring from this tendency. There is less deceit among the young than in periods when the rod kept down their spirits, and tempted them to hypocrisy. They practise less self-restraint than they did under the old reign of fear. But I would not return to that reign ; better have their faults on the outside of their character, as now, than disguised and concealed, as in past ages. We can spare the old Puritanic discipline of outward subordination, if we only secure in its stead an inward self-discipline. To promote that vital quality, we need, first, midst, and last, a steady obedience. Let us be gentle and calm, as well as considerate, determined, and uniform in exacting that obedience, and all shall issue well.

It is said, and the testimony comes from many quarters, that obedience to parents is less enforced in this than in any other Christian country. Our children are allowed to use language to their natural guardians which would have shocked the ears of our fathers. In many instances the son does not obey the father, but so complete is the degeneracy, that the father actually obeys the son. And the daughter, instead of asking her mother to do this or that, tells, that is, commands, her to do as she wishes. Is this to be the prevalent practice ? Then may we well tremble for the consequences. For then reverence, that prime virtue, that corner-stone of piety, must soon, also, be rejected and disappear. Then the law cannot be respected ; and religion herself will

be disallowed and set aside when the authority of the parent shall cease to be recognized and obeyed. Alas for us, if, as some contend, such are the inevitable fruits of our republican institutions! Take away the sentiment of reverence, let the words of father and mother be unheeded, and their presence command no respect, then is the gold of patriarchal ages, and of prophets, and of the very Son of God, become dim, and the most fine gold is changed! When the sanctuary of home is thus violated, the pillars of the state also totter to their fall.

Earnestly, then, let us labor and pray that the parent may be reinstated in his rightful position. When the child enters our dwelling a new-born babe, he is not too young to be controlled; nor, till he leaves our roof, and weaves the web of his own untried fortunes, is he too old to reverence and obey his parents. Let us not yield to the contagion of example in this respect. It is not enough to plead, "My child minds as well as other people's children." Nay, that is not the true standard, — but this rather, "What doth the law of God require of me as a parent? What does my office demand? How shall I best do my duty to these earth-destined, heaven-destined, immortal beings, placed in my care? Shall I take the course easiest for myself?" "Nay," conscience must reply, "I dare not do that; the consequences of this indolent, self-indulgent course will be fatal, — I can now see it, — fatal both to my children and myself!"

The law that requires obedience to parents is universal, irrepealable, eternal. If we desire peace ourselves, if we have any true love of our offspring, let us listen to those many voices which have come from homes of want and woe, and from the walls of the prison: — "O, my cruelly fond parents, had you exercised that authority which God gave you over your children, and had you checked my childish waywardness, and corrected in love my boyish disobedience, — had you subjected me to the salutary restraint of domestic law, — I had not thus brought you to sorrow and shame, nor brought myself, with a ruined character, to my present degraded condition!"

CHAPTER VIII.

SELF-GOVERNMENT.

THE history of the prophet Samuel, especially that of his childhood, is replete with instruction on the great topic of self-government. He was received by his mother as a special blessing, and in that light, to use the strong language of Scripture, from his very cradle she "lent him to the Lord." She early, in her own heart, consecrated him, although not in the line of Levi, as a prophet. And, through the prayers she offered for him, the lessons she gave him, and her own beautiful example, it came to pass, that, while yet a child, he "ministered before the Lord, girded with a linen ephod."

The case of Samuel was not a peculiar one. It was not by a miracle, nor yet by any natural endowments setting him apart from and above all other children, that he was led at this tender age to dedicate himself to God. It was done mainly by the influence of his mother, — a mother taken from the ordinary walks of life, and not favored above multitudes who have since sustained, and who do now sustain,

this sacred relation. It needs only her spirit, her deep piety, and her resolute purpose, to train up the children now on the stage to gird themselves each with the linen ephod. Let there be the same parental wisdom, prayerfulness, and fidelity, and we should see many sons beginning, even in childhood, by the purity and devotedness of their lives, to minister before the Lord.

Samuel was marked by one trait to which I would now direct special attention. We are told that he grew on and continued in his high work, and that, while so doing, he was waked in the night-season by a voice. It was the voice, as it proved, of the Lord. Samuel did not close his ear, but listened reverently to it. It told him of the fate of Eli, the rejection of his house from the sacred office, and that he himself should be clothed with that office. He went forth in obedience to God, and led a life pervaded, elevated, and sanctified by the spirit of self-consecration.

The government of his mother had been of that wise and gentle, yet firm character, which, while it secured respect for her commands, conducted him up to the high plane of a steady *self*-government. This is the result of all judicious education. It does not leave a child weakly dependent on others, on companions, or society, or to be upheld even by his parents alone; but it inspires such sentiments, affections, and principles, as awaken and sustain self-

reliance and self-government. Without these, we can never trust a child in the world ; but with them, filled with a personal piety, a deep-rooted benevolence, and a calm moral independence, he is armed at all points. He will then overcome temptation, and rise higher and higher, to the very pinnacle of moral excellence.

We must begin the work of education by considering that " each man is a drama in himself ; has to play all the parts in it ; is to be king and rebel, successful and vanquished, free and slave ; and needs a bringing up fit for the universal creature that he is." His intellect should be trained, from the first, to exercise dominion over all it can understand, and his moral nature to act in conjunction with it. The mind must govern the body, and the soul, that is, the religious nature, reign over both. A child cannot be too soon taught that his spirit must control his senses. Were man like the lower animals in his destiny, he would not have been placed on a planet like ours, " where self-indulgence starves, but competence, independence, and a consciousness of powers superior to mere natural forces, are the exceeding great reward of exertion." Man was made for moral and spiritual progress. At no period of life, therefore, can we dispense with a vigorous self-control ; let this truth be ingrained in the little child.

The foundation of the virtue required is laid by the Creator in the intense love of action and of con-

struction which characterizes childhood. Every boy is an architect; he must have something to design and to draw; he wants constantly to build. He will fashion a thousand things if you only give him materials. He is intent upon imitating everything he sees made or done by others. So with the little girl; her doll, and baby-house, and "playing have company," show the incessant activity of her mind, and her variety of talents. But all this energy of childhood is apt to be expended upon outward things. It is devoted to changing the forms and uses of material objects. And this exercise is well; a child should be encouraged to plan and to execute as many things as possible; let his invention be cultivated, and let us teach his hands to labor with diligence.

But I would encourage not only an "objective," but a "subjective," industry. Let the genius of childhood be directed to the world *within*. Present that to your son as the noblest field on which he can labor; induce him early to dedicate his heart to inward toil. Would mothers set before their daughters this glorious work, we should not see multitudes, as we now do, become either the heartless devotees of fashion, or a prey to *ennui* from their neglect of self-discipline, and of a just appreciation of the high satisfactions of an independent, self-sustained character.

As conducive to this elevation of purpose and life, the aim of all education should be to strengthen and

to purify the will. A child is at first to do many things because we desire and command it. But this is only his pupilage ; it is a preparatory process, the end of which must be that he will do what we now require of him from choice. We wish him to be virtuous ; but virtue is a voluntary thing. When we compel a child to do any particular act, we rob that act of its moral quality. Obedience to us may be a virtue, but the act itself is not one. Novälis said truly, that " character is a perfectly educated will." Where the will has not been exercised, and made pure as well as strong, the child has received no true moral culture ; his spirit is yet feeble, his character undeveloped.

The Psalmist, in describing the greatness of God, says of him, " Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power." What power so noble as this, — power to mould the human will, to touch those secret springs that move to voluntary goodness ? Blessed is the parent who can wield this truly divine power. Could we but do this, our children would grow up in the energy and " the beauty of holiness." Had we the godlike power to lead them to choose good rather than evil, truth before falsehood, forgiveness rather than retaliation, and to make them prefer kind, disinterested acts before selfish ones, then, indeed, to us would be fulfilled the Divine promise, " Thy youth shall come forward like dew from the womb of the morning." God and goodness would then grace their whole lives.

A prime point in all voluntary acts is self-restraint. It is easy to restrain a child, so long as your eye and your command are upon him. It is not easy to infuse into him a principle that will keep him in the right path when your eye and your command are taken off. And yet, until you have done that, you have not educated the child. To educate — let us never forget this — is to call forth the powers and faculties, and that is never done fully by a merely passive obedience. He is a good teacher who maintains order while he is in the school-room ; yet a far better teacher is he who so trains his pupils, that, if he leave the room for an hour, the same order and quiet continue. Parents must leave the great room of moral culture often, at last for ever, and blessed will be their work if their children shall continue, as in their presence, so in their absence, energetic and pure, self-governed, self-restrained, both lovers and doers of the right.

To accomplish this great end, we must teach these little ones, not merely to regulate their words and their overt actions, but to control their inmost desires. Let them feel that here is the fountain of all good and all evil in life. Not what for this or that reason they actually do, but what they *wish* to do, should be their daily criterion. Every one has impulses, more or less numerous, and more or less pure, toward acts of goodness, and these are to be cherished. But they do not constitute the main el-

ement of character. Character consists in principles, — in what is, not like impulse, evanescent and uncertain, but fixed, determined, abiding. We need the clear head as well as the warm heart. In the words of Dr. Bushnell, "The head and the heart should be regarded as the two branches of a legislative assembly, and nothing should be enacted as a law which has not the sanction of both houses." But how can the desires of the heart be conformed to the dictates of the head? Only by keeping them under our control. Let them be lawless, unrestrained, fitful, and they soon trample on the understanding, set at naught the counsels of good judgment, take the wings of imagination, and corrupt the affections.

There is no basis of happiness, but in the control of our desires. If we allow ourselves to look with an envious or a longing eye on wealth, honors, fame, power, pleasure, or whatever else the senses may present or the fancy sketch, it is idle to expect peace of mind. Where the parent stimulates such desires in his child, he is his worst enemy. The boy cannot be a Crœsus, nor a king, — he cannot live for luxury or self-indulgence; why, then, madden his spirit by leading him to sigh for these things? Better far teach him to subdue every desire of this kind. That he can do, but gratify them he cannot. Why cherish in this daughter a passion for dress, fashion, and display? She may never

have the means to indulge this spirit. And if she has, what a miserable ambition it were to pant for praise, to live on the eyes and the lips of observers, and to sacrifice all inward quiet, if not all single-hearted purity, for a bubble that will burst at the touch !

Teach your child to control his desires, for so only can he preserve that perfect balance of character in which virtue consists. " The poise of the mind, like that of the body," as one well observes, " is safest when it stands upright." That posture requires a perfect self-control. Give way to every desire, and you become heated, feverish, and desultory in your whole walk. We never advance in anything, whether secular or sacred, except we steadily desire it. The painter desires to make a perfect picture ; it is only so long as he keeps alive the first radiant ideal, and the first burning impulse, that he can realize it on the canvas, or make progress toward it. And what will your child do without this same ever-burning desire for moral excellence ? Let him never feel it, and he will never commence the grand life-drawn portrait; let him lose that desire, and allow ease, pleasure, earth, to rob him of self-subjection, and he will sink into you cannot tell what depths of irresoluteness, impurity, and secret, if not indeed open, guilt.

What I say of the desires is true of the appetites, of temper, and the grosser occasions of temptation

and evil. We commence our being under the close inspection, in all these matters, of the parental eye. We do not select our own diet ; we do not control our own appetites ; another selects and controls for us. An anxious mother metes out to each day its food and drink. But the wise mother so performs this office that she forms the tastes of her child, and soon leads him to self-regulation. That accomplished, you will see him put aside, on occasions, the cake, and choose the plain bread. We need this same principle to control the passions. A child shows temper ; what will you do with him ? You can so rule and so terrify him as to destroy his temper, or, as it is termed, " break his will." But is that desirable ? Nay, in so doing, you pronounce that God implanted in this child a tendency which you must utterly root up. This cannot be true ; our Creator must have made us aright, capable of passion, yet able to subdue it. Washington had naturally a violent temper, and it was never eradicated ; without it he might have been a man of but ordinary force. The control of his passions fitted him to lead armies and councils ; ruling himself well, he could rule other men and the nation. Point your boy to him, and he will learn to curb the fire of his spirit. By long discipline he will come to shut his lips in the midst of provocation, and so to conquer the hot-blooded, the testy, and the vindictive, and thus finally to bring the whole world to his feet, by first conquering himself.

CHAPTER IX.

MORAL COURAGE. — SELF-SACRIFICE.

No quality is more needed in this age and this land than moral courage, — courage to do right where it is the custom to do wrong. The greatest of modern tyrants is public opinion. Its power is seen in the tendency of domestic conversation. "What will people say? Will they not look at me? What will they think, if I do thus or thus?" — This and similar language is the staple of conversation in very many families. And it tends to destroy all purity of motive, and to generate a moral cowardice. We owe a certain deference, it is true, to the opinion of others; it is often a safeguard to virtue, where higher motives would prove ineffectual. Yet it is a fatal error to allow it supremacy in our conduct. And the dangers lie chiefly in that direction. We are not sensible how constantly we appeal, in presence of our children, if not directly for them, to this dread tribunal, the opinion of others. But where respectability ranks higher than principle, we shall look in vain for elevated virtue. It is mournful

to see so many of our children trained up in subjection to this power. What can we hope of a race who fear the speech of others, the ridicule even of the most worthless character, more than they fear sin? Let us remember that without moral independence the character is always in peril. "Do right," I would say to a child, "because it *is* right. Draw your rules of conduct from conscience, and not from those you meet at school or elsewhere. Never do a thing, where right and wrong are concerned, merely because others are doing it, — not, though you are left alone in the course you take." This should be enjoined until it becomes a habit with the child so to conduct himself; yes, to conduct *himself*, not to be conducted, borne about, and mastered, by others.

I have known parents who expressly taught their children to return evil for evil. "If you are struck, strike back again," says the mother, as she sends her child out in the morning. "Never bear an insult, but give back words, if you cannot blows," is the creed of the father. But who are these parents? "Christians," they undoubtedly reply. Did Christ, then, do thus? Was this the rule of his life, and this his language on the cross? O parent, think, I pray you, of the end of tuition like this! Look unto Jesus, inhale his spirit, and you will rise to a nobler ambition. "Always do what you are afraid to do," I have somewhere read.

This I would say to my child, — "Let others return anger for anger, but be you mild and gentle; always dare to do right." When Franklin was a boy, he walked the streets of Philadelphia eating a roll; he had the look, perhaps the laugh, of many upon him. But he cared for none of these things. That man was, through life, a moral hero, — modest, yet of a lion heart, brave, yet a man of imperturbable peace. We want Franklins now; who of our youth will put on the armour of righteousness and go forth to the battle?

In a world like this, we need to cultivate self-possession. A child should be taught courage amid danger. Does he fear the dark? Teach him that God is with him, as in the light, so in the darkness; and that, if he does good, he is clad in a coat of mail. "Did a sudden noise affright him? lo, this or that hath caused it." Take heed "that ghostly fears be not the night companions of thy child." Misery, and even madness, in subsequent years, "have been sowed in the nights of infancy." Children should be accustomed to see sickness and suffering, to qualify them for future duty. The judicious mother of Lamartine, among other aids which went to form that noble spirit, used this. She early took her children to see the sick and the dying, and to wait round their beds. "We saw," says he, "frightful scenes of poverty, suffering, and even agony. We thus learned to feel none of that repug-

nance which renders men in after life weak and helpless in cases of illness, useless to the sufferer, and timid at the aspect of death." What discipline more effective than this? Exposed as we are to unimagined calamities, to bear and to witness such manifold sufferings, both of body and mind, duty, selfishness even, calls us to train our children to meet these events. We cannot begin too early to inculcate the necessity of fortitude. It is said the first lesson the ancient Mexicans taught their children was on this subject. No sooner was a child born, than they addressed him in these words: — "Child, thou art come into the world to endure; suffer, and say nothing."

The corner-stone of character — we can come to no other conclusion — should be inscribed with this single word, "self-help." Whatever we do for the young, it should all lead them to do for themselves. It is sweet to lean on a mother's breast; yet there is a work to be done in this life, and to accomplish it we must part even from that dear breast. I saw, not long since, a sailor-boy depicted as mounting the ropes of a ship. The love of home, sportiveness, all gentle qualities, were written on the face, and yet underneath them lay a resolute spirit, that foretokened no ordinary character. Every boy must mount the shrouds, and sail the great ocean, and battle for himself the fitful elements of life. Let him begin early to do it. Encourage in him, not a noisy man-

ner and a fear-nothing spirit, but a deep, quiet moral energy. He cannot begin too soon to form his own opinions of right and wrong, and establish good principles for himself. Do not keep him always in leading-strings, but induce him early to walk alone. The sons of very rich men too often depend on those riches, and their life is to spend, not earn. The great do not transmit their greatness ; the son leans on the name of the father, and so becomes a dwarf. Our children should be taught, early and late, that they are to work their own passage across the sea of life. They should feel that, for whatever they hope, whether to gain or to be, they must rely on their own right arm. Be tender to your son, but, line upon line, inspire him with self-trust. "High be his heart, faithful his will, clear his sight, until a simple purpose shall be to him as strong as iron necessity is to others."

The education of some children proceeds, one must suppose, on the principle that we need do nothing in this world which we find is disagreeable, or which we even fear will be so. "I do not want to do it," from the lips of their children, is a sufficient excuse with many parents for their not doing what is requested of them. But think of the result of this training ! How often is every one obliged to perform disagreeable duties ! We perform them, notwithstanding their unpleasantness, because they *are* duties. If you allow your child to omit

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everything of this kind, you strike the very word *duty* from his moral catalogue, and put *pleasures* in its place.

And let us not do this to save ourselves trouble. It is hard to require of a child what he much dislikes. Many parents tell us they had rather do a thing themselves than attempt to persuade their children to do it. The young in these days raise, it is said, so many objections, and exhibit such a reluctance to obey, that it is easier to leave them to their indolence, and perform what must be done ourselves, than to enforce obedience. Alas for us, and for them also, if we yield to this fatal doctrine! Better task our own patience to the utmost, than, to spare ourselves unpleasant words or feelings, permit our children in this self-seeking, enervating habit. The question should never be, Which is the easier course? but, What does parental duty require of me?

The essence of the virtue I inculcate lies in self-sacrifice. There is a great truth in the Catholic doctrine, set forth so beautifully by Fénelon, of self-renunciation. First of all, the little child should give himself up to God. Few, except those who begin young, come ever to say with Herbert, —

> "Lord, take thy way; for sure thy way is best.
> Stretch or contract me, thy poor debtor;
> This is but tuning of my breast,
> To make the music better."

This devout lesson, sooner or later, all must learn. When we look most earnestly to God for help, then we best help ourselves. Open your bosom and let in the divine beams, and you rise and go forth full of vigor, and triumphant over evil.

Infuse even now into your child the spirit of self-sacrifice. The mother of Samuel made him a little coat, and brought it to him from year to year, as they came to sacrifice at the temple. Mothers, imitate this holy example. Clothe your children in robes consecrated to God and duty. Array these daughters in the divine garments of meekness, self-surrender, and a disinterested care and toil. A little girl, — and the case stands not alone, — amid burning fever, was patient and quiet; it was a blessed sight, for Heaven shone round that pillow. But in brighter rays still shone the Father in the face of another, who waited gently by the bed of a sick mother. She gave up school, amusements, almost her very food and sleep, and ministered — the little angel — to those parched lips and that wasting frame. And when at length the Father took that dear friend from her, I did not fear for her, alone though she was in this bleak world, for I remembered the message to each soul: —

"Wert thou never taught to feel and know
That the truest love has its roots in woe,
Thou wouldst not e'er attain the tranquil height,
Where wisdom purifies the sight,

And God unfolds to th' humble gaze
The light and beauty of his ways."

Shrink not, then, from training your children to know and to try the stern tasks of self-reliance and self-sacrifice.

Two courses lie before the parent. To begin early the work with his children, and prepare them at every stage for all that will follow, — to fill them with dependence upon God, and independence, wherever principle and duty are concerned, of man. To do this, he must deny himself and deny them. The other course is, to leave them entirely unrestrained, — their moral character unformed, their temper undisciplined, their principles unestablished. Which will you choose? No one, with the consequences before him, can hesitate.

Who would leave a dear child to make up in after years for the errors of parental neglect? Who, instead of training him with a firm and gentle hand now, would send him forth where "the severe lash of disappointment and suffering must, during his subsequent career, supply the omissions of his youth, and where he must be trained at last, through much enduring, to that point from which a good education would have started him"? Let us not leave these tender beings to so cruel a destiny; let them not be compelled, after many wanderings, and all their mortifications and failures, to learn late what we should have taught them early. Do we our du-

ty, and there is hope that they will, by their hearts and their lives, minister before the Lord ; there is hope, if we be but faithful, that the linen ephod will be put on even to-day.

CHAPTER X.

MOTIVES TO BE ADDRESSED.

THE influences which make or mar the character of man are, for the most part, of a subtile, unobtrusive nature. All action originates, of course, in motives, — that is, in a moving power. We accomplish much or little, and what we accomplish is either good or evil, according to the force and the quality of the motives under which we act. This is true of the man, and it is equally true of "the child," who "is father of the man." He will be pure or impure, virtuous or vicious, according to the motives habitually influential in his conduct. He is born with certain capacities, faculties, and propensities; and the direction these will take, the predominance of one class or another among them, and the result upon his life, depend on the exercise of his free-will. Develop his will aright, and you give him the best possible education. And this is only saying, Present the right motives before him, and lead him to see and feel them, and you do all you can do to make him pure in heart, pious toward God, and true toward man.

No vineyard is so sacred as the mind of a child. The vines are now just germinating, and now they bear tender grapes. But secret and stealthy mischief-mongers are already there. Take these away, "take away the foxes, the little foxes that spoil these vines," in their early days; prune them with care; train them to the heaven-reaching trellis; subject them to all generous influences, and they shall at last bring forth good grapes, noble clusters, fair to the eye, sweet to the taste, and giving life to the soul.

The scale of human motives is long; and by few of our parents is it carefully noted; yet, to effect the great end of education, we must understand it thoroughly, and we must address always the highest and best motives a child will regard.

The lowest motives are those connected with appetite and sense. It has been said that "all children are by nature gluttons." It is quite certain that food and drink occupy a large part of their thoughts and desires. A child needs a liberal sustenance; but he can be very early taught the momentous lesson, that he should "eat to live, and not live to eat." Many parents never seem aware of this truth. They teach their children, and unhappily too often confirm the doctrine by their own example, that it is what goeth into the mouth, not what cometh out of it, and cometh from the heart, that constitutes the object and essence of life. The mother promises her boy a

cake for his good behaviour ; and the daughter shall have candy if she do well. What is this but making the gratifications of appetite the highest motive with the child ? It is making that first which should be last in his mind. It is saying to him that plain food and a wholesome diet are an evil. Who can doubt that the foundation is often thus laid for the future inebriate, sensualist, epicure, and debauchee ? A habit of pampering the palate, and sacrificing the higher to the lower nature, may sometimes be traced back to this fatal parental error, commenced, perhaps, in the very nursery.

Kindred to that of appetite is the development of hope. This leads the child to anticipate savory food with his utmost delight. But let not the noble sentiment of hope be confined to this low object. It should be our earliest care to raise it to things of a mental and spiritual character. Incite the little girl to hope for beautiful objects, to take pleasure in rich colors, to enjoy sweet sounds, to anticipate with a keen sense the odors of flower and field and forest. Take off your boy's attention from what he is to eat and drink, by talking with him about his lessons, his work, or his moral deportment. When he comes home from school, let not his first question be, — "What shall we have for dinner ?" I have known young persons, who, instead of saying — which I think is the most we should ever say about food and drink — that they *liked* this or that, would exclaim,

"I *love* such or such an article dearly." The whole strength of heart and soul was expended upon some dish for the table ; they showed an enthusiasm in regard to it which I never saw in them where love to a friend, or moral excellence alone, was concerned. Let us guard our children against this melancholy condition.

It is no romance to believe that a child can be so trained as to find his highest delight in things of an intellectual and moral nature. There is pleasure in the mere exercise of our inward faculties, and never is it more intense than in childhood. The simple act of thinking, feeling, willing, is then a luxury. Why should we not take advantage of this fact in addressing the motives of our children ? Why have so much faith in appeals to what is low and gross in them, and so little in their purer nature ?

I would first of all encourage hopefulness in my child. I would lead him to lay little plans for himself, and anticipate success in their execution. In a world full of difficulties and dangers, like ours, nothing is more essential than a disposition to look on the bright side of life. There is wisdom in hope ; for it bears us up amid obstacles, and thus insures temporal prosperity. It is friendly, also, to moral improvement. Without hope, we never attempt a high character. It is a shield against temptation, and an anchor in trouble. Fill the soul, therefore, in childhood, with a hope, that the changes, crosses,

and disappointments of subsequent years shall not exhaust.

And now see that this hope is bestowed on elevated objects. Let the good to which it aspires be, as far as possible, of an inward nature ; teach the child to expect much of others, and of himself. And though they should fail to meet his expectations once and again, let him cherish the hope that they will yet do better. But though all around him disappoint his expectations, never suffer him to give up to discouragement, and to come short of his part, because they do of theirs. Lead him to bind to his heart, and carry out in his life, the noble motto, " Hope on, hope ever."

Another motive much appealed to is fear. This sentiment is natural, and has its place, therefore, in all moral education. But surely not the first place. The child who is governed supremely by the rod, or by constant threats, will be depressed, timid, and feeble in character. Or, if his spirit be not broken, it is kept only at bay, covering up a latent resistance, cherishing an insidious deceit, if not hypocrisy. And, in coming years, that imprisoned spirit may break forth in reckless courses. In this manner was Lord Byron educated. His mother would at one time load him with passionate caresses, but the next treat him with the harshness of a tyrant. And behold in his subsequent character of passion and peevishness, malice, bitterness, fitfulness, and caprice,

the inevitable results of early mismanagement and unprincipled severity.

A strong motive with children is shame, a sensitiveness to reputation, and an apprehension of pain at its loss. The boy cannot wear this cap, nor the girl that bonnet, because some one in the school will point at them. This feeling in its excess is pernicious ; it makes us the slaves of fashion and opinion, and is a root of unhappiness. Beyond question, it is a source of much of the " splendid misery " of this world. We look on the magnificence of wealth in our cities, and ask, perhaps, if its votaries must not be perfectly happy. Refinement, luxury, ease, a palace to reside in, and a carriage at command, are here ; and " can these splendid creatures," especially these ladies, " enthroned in silk, know trouble or sorrow ? And are not their homes the abodes of peace and love and every joy ? We cannot penetrate the sacred mysteries of the fireside ; but could we read the secret history of fashionable life and fashionable folly, we should encounter such a record of broken faith, broken vows, and broken hearts, as would make the soul recoil in horror and amazement to find that all this brilliant and dazzling display of wealth and beauty and taste and refinement was but the fantastic and mocking mask of a wide-yawning domestic hell." What tortures do these voluntary slaves daily undergo, lest some neighbour should outshine them in the circles of fashion !

That child who is educated to live only for the eye and the speech of the gazing multitude, and to blush when eclipsed in her dress, deserves commiseration.

But this sensitiveness to opinion, when affected with moderation, exerts a salutary influence. God, in implanting it so deeply in our nature, must have had some good purpose. If a child fail in his lesson, or commit a disreputable act, he should be ashamed. The evil lies in being ashamed of what is in itself right. When this passion becomes a supreme motive of conduct, it vitiates the character. It is not well to say often to a youth, "They will laugh at you." Better say, if it be the truth, "You will deserve censure if you do thus or thus." What we merit, not what we may or shall receive, should be our habitual standard of conduct. Shame too often oppresses the soul, and takes the life from our virtue. In the journal of a traveller in New Mexico, he tells us his party were overtaken in midwinter by a storm of snow; and so fast did it fall, and so rapidly did it gain, that at night it buried these travellers over quite deeply. And there, beneath a load of snow, and with a difficult respiration, they slept. Thus does shame cover over the moral man. He may live and breathe still, but beneath what a load must he do it! How much better to enjoy the bright sun of a good conscience, and the clear air of virtue, than to bear this oppressive burden!

Early in appearance, as a motive, is the love of accumulation and gain. The infant grasps his toy and books, before he can speak of "the rights of property." And doubtless he has rights; and even then we should sacredly respect them. Let the little child say, "This is mine, and this yours," for so will he learn to take care of his own. Yet beware lest his desire of possessions grow into avarice. I would encourage a child to amass, that he might use, and use well, what he gains. Let him never be allowed to hoard. If your daughter desires to accumulate presents, jewelry, articles of apparel, or even books, only to store them in her drawers, and feast her own eyes by an occasional review of them, or if she wishes only to show them to others with boasting and pride, then beware, for there lie the seeds of a selfish and sordid disposition.

Prudence and economy are always commendable; they should be taught to every child, whether rich or poor. But every child, in whatever circumstances, should also be encouraged to save, not only for personal wants and uses, but for the express object of being able to give of his own to others. Show the little child the pleasure there is in sharing whatever he has with others. If you allow him to lay aside any dainty for his palate, let a part of it be reserved for a brother or sister. Hold up to him the meanness of a greedy spirit. Do not give him large sums of money, that he may have to bestow on others; but

teach him to give away his own things, to forego, for example, his confectionary, for the sake of bestowing something on a companion. Sacrifice, self-denial, privation, these are the only basis of true generosity, and of a God-approved, as well as man-approved, charity.

It is the custom of many parents to hire their children to work for them; some employ the pecuniary motive until they can obtain no service of a child, that is disagreeable to him, except by paying him for it. Yet consider the effect of such training: it stimulates a low passion, the love of money, and weakens the highest and best sentiments in the child. It nullifies parental authority; for the child will do nothing that he dislikes merely because he is commanded to do it. The parent, by this course, is brought down to a level with any one in the street who asks assistance of his child. He must offer a compensation or he is boldly refused the assistance. Money, gain, — not reverence, not, either, true love, — becomes the all-absorbing principle with a child thus educated.

It may be necessary, in extraordinary cases, to hire the labor of our children. There may be a natural indolence, that requires this stimulus at first. But it should be used with extreme caution; for, like every other strong stimulant, it becomes more and more craving, until it leads, if unchecked, to fatal results. I would make my children presents;

but they should not be in the form of rewards. A gift does your child good ; it calls forth his affection for you, and awakens, or should awaken, his gratitude. But to pay him wages degrades both him and yourself. Train your daughter to be useful at home, for the sake of pleasing you. The habit once formed, she will ask no higher reward ; she will not dream of being paid for every duty she performs in your chambers or parlour.

There is no harm in promising a child something if he will correct a certain bad personal habit, not of a moral character, but rendering him awkward or disagreeable. It calls his attention to the habit, and impresses on his mind its evil, and the necessity of amending it. This is a harmless reward, while to hire a child to be good, to obey you, or to do his duty, is substituting an impure for a pure motive ; it is putting "hay, wood, and stubble" at the foundation of the character.

Still higher in the scale of motives ranks the love of approbation. The young mind is exquisitely alive to praise and blame. If with the adult we see it everywhere true that this quality is a criterion of character, and "as the fining-pot is to the silver, and as the furnace is to gold, so is a man to his praise," it is emphatically so with children. We hold in our hands, as parents and instructors, no instrument of culture so powerful, and at the same time so delicate in its construction and uses, as this. I apprehend

we commit more errors on this point than any other. We misunderstand the motives of children, why they act as they do, how we may expect them to act, and by what means we should try to induce them to pure action. Hence, in our whole system of praise and blame, and rewards and punishments, we go sadly astray.

Let one, for example, look through a day, and see how much oftener he censures than commends his child. The ninety-and-nine good deeds are passed by unnoticed, while the hundredth evil deed is sharply rebuked. That must be a reprobate creature who does more wrong than right things. Where is the child, for example, who tells more falsehoods than truths in the day? Where, then, is the justice of bestowing more blame than praise? Only be as watchful for the good as you now are for the evil, and you will change the entire complexion of each passing day. How many homes made happy should we have by this one reform!

Many parents administer rewards and punishments, not according to the actual deserts of their children, but according to the mood they are themselves in at the moment. Are they in good humour, then everything suits them; they are pleased, and they praise liberally. But are they not in good humour, does their business perplex them, or do their domestic affairs go wrong, or are they for any cause excited and irritated, then no act of their child seems right, and

the harsh word and the quick blow come, as unjust as they are frequent. On how many occasions do we lose sight of the motive, in our displeasure at the consequences, of an act! The daughter breaks an article of furniture; the mother is exasperated. She does not stop to inquire whether it was done intentionally, or even carelessly, but proceeds at once to punish, according to the value of the article. The child has a keen sense of justice, and sadly and most culpably is it wounded by these unmerited castigations. Better lose the half of your household effects than thus violate this sacred, God-implanted principle of justice in a youthful breast.

I once knew a father who brought a load of wood from the forest to his door on a cold winter's noon. While he partook of his dinner, his sons, to relieve their parent, threw the wood from his wagon. They went in joyfully to tell him of their good service. But he, instead of commending them for their generous intentions, was at first silent, and then coldly censured them, because the wood was not thrown precisely in the spot he desired. Were it not wiser to blame according to a child's motive? Does your child make you a present, receive it not as it may benefit you or otherwise, but in the spirit in which it is given. Consider always the motive, and if you err, let it be on the side of charity. Give too much, rather than too little credit; for this is far better in its bearing on a child's character.

Over and over say unto yourself, — "What did he mean by this and that action? Let me give him his full desert." In one word, be calm, be deliberate, judge not in haste, still less in passion; then will you judge and give credit aright.

CHAPTER XI.

MOTIVES TO BE ADDRESSED. — CONTINUED.

CHILDREN are much influenced by what I may call the family opinion. There are certain ideas current in every household, and a corresponding standard of conduct. There is an average of principles; and there is a moral tone, which does much to decide the characters of the children. We see some schools governed almost entirely by the school opinion. Where it embraces the prominent virtues of diligence, punctuality, order, &c., these qualities prevail. Such is its power, that it often enables the teacher to secure good discipline, and much strictness even, without employing corporal chastisement, or any undue severity. It sometimes rises so high as to give correct views of the whole circle of moral and religious duties.

Now, why cannot parents establish a similar public opinion in the family? Why may they not render incorrect principles, and impure actions, words, and even thoughts and feelings, so unpopular, that they shall be excluded from the conduct and conversation

of every child in the circle? Let elevated examples of virtue be familiarly spoken of, and constantly commended. Encourage a mild, but frank and decided, rebuke of every shade of wrong-doing. Let the children become sincere helpers of one another in the great work of right thinking and right deportment. Only keep the spirit of love constantly alive, and father and mother, son and daughter, brother and sister, will become mutual teachers in one grand Christian school.

A pure motive, and one we may often address, is love to the parent. The child who desires to please father and mother is kept easily in the path of virtue. That sweet smile is sunshine to his heart, and those approving tones are his daily music. Nor does absence weaken this stimulus. Throughout the day he anticipates a delicious recompense for the temptations he has resisted, and the progress he has made in whatever is pure and praiseworthy, when at night he shall meet those dear faces. And in later years, when toil and gain have borne us far from the loved abode of our early days, we rejoice to look over the space that parts us from those snow-crowned heads, and again, buoyant with our childhood's reminiscences, guided by the star of home,

> "we come,
> Our toils and dangers past, to seek rest,
> And love, and welcoming eyes, and gentle hearts."

"Love is first to be instilled," in the words of

Coleridge, "and out of love obedience is to be educed." The value of filial obedience depends on its being affectionate and cheerful. If it be cold and reluctant, it loses half its merit. Love to man, a tender and sympathetic spirit, and a generous, forbearing and forgiving disposition, are of transcendent importance. But how shall the fountain of these holy sensibilities be opened in the soul? It is the mother who can do most to awaken in her child the social and amiable sentiments. If true to her office, she will repress every selfish propensity, and encourage all that is disinterested and self-denying in her children. She will open the shutters of their hearts, and let in the sun of love upon them. The wise father will sedulously inculcate on his sons the duty of living out of themselves. He will represent it as their privilege to cause as much happiness, and that, too, in as pure ways as possible, among their relatives, associates, and friends. He will teach them to be merciful, and never forget that

> "To err is human; to forgive, divine."

Indeed, love in any form, and to any being, is an elevating motive. It is good that a child be taught to love the very animals.

> "Let there be something, though a bird, which he
> May spend a little kindness on."

Cowper was full of tenderness to the brute creation; his rabbits interest every lover of his writings,

fit, and hasten to that captivating region where a treasure better than gold is accumulated, and where no sickness is, and no enemy can destroy, but where life, even eternal life, will be his sure possession.

I now approach the culminating point of human motives, by introducing the virtue of conscientiousness. Let this be prominent in your child's character, and you have much to hope for in his fututre course. Let there be an earnest desire to do right in everything, and let this desire be enlightened and healthful, and we have secured nearly all that education, morally speaking, can accomplish.

We should never rest content with motives which originate in outward relations and circumstances. I have said that the little child leans on the judgment of his mother to decide for him what is right. But, as he grows up, he should be weaned from her in this respect. He must now seek his moral nutriment, and his chief spiritual sustenance, elsewhere. Let not the daughter be trained to depend on her mother at sixteen, as entirely as she did at six, to know what she ought to do. Her own sense of duty should before this have been so exercised as to point out to her what is right and what wrong. Where the conscience is well developed, a child becomes keen-sighted to evil and good. The boy loves truth so fervently that he shuns every form of deception. He is not satisfied with telling no absolute lies ; he is anxious to have his feelings, as well

as his words, true. He will not, for example, hide a knife or a top which he has found, and then say he does not know who owns it; he will take pains to find the owner.

A child's conscientiousness must be so strong, that he will do right when alone, no less than while in presence of others. He should fear the rebuke of his own spirit more than that of his teacher or his parents. Every boy has opportunities to do good in secret. If you can lead him to perform such acts, to give things to others indirectly and unseen, or to defend a playmate who is spoken against in his absence, or to help a poor man whom he will never see again, you strengthen his conscience, and help him to form a noble character.

Some children incline to cover up their faults; they are naturally secretive. Such should be taught the duty of confession. Let there be no false pride, no pretending to perfection; but show every child that he has faults, like all human beings, and that he is bound to confess them. Inspire your daughter with the magnanimous disposition to do justice to others, and to acknowledge her own errors. This is a difficult lesson; it is worth the toil of a whole life to learn it. Commence the task, then, with your child from his earliest years.

Let not your son slight any work you give him to do; and show him that the wrong of doing so is greater where he conceals it from you, than if you

saw it. There are a thousand cases in the day where a conscientious child will be faithful in secret. And if conscience be miseducated, there will be constant opportunities and temptations to practise deceptions which shall pass without detection.

I would now say that a child's conscience may be over-sensitive. He may study his own feelings too closely, and have a morbid dread of inward reproach. This is the case when he thinks more about his own feelings than what occasions those feelings. If your daughter sits, hour after hour, brooding over the state of her mind, and fearful it is a wrong one, her mental condition is unhealthful. Let her go abroad, and do good to others, and she will then have a sound and an approving conscience.

It is not enough that we act conscientiously ; we must also enlighten our conscience. The world is full of examples of error and sin that spring from the light within becoming darkness. Bigotry, persecution, and martyrdom have all sheltered themselves under the plea of conscience. It is not enough for a child to say, " I know I am right " ; he must be able to give a reason for this confidence. Any one can protest his innocence, and cry aloud against all who oppose him. But not every one can show good grounds for such protestations ; and that because so many are influenced by a blind obstinacy, instead of an intelligent and candid spirit.

Above all, we should strive to keep a child's

conscience active up to his own standard of right. Do not let him be satisfied with merely being as good as most of the boys at his school. He should be directed to a law higher than this world would impose, — the law of his own breast. Because others play truant, that is not to excuse him in it. They may break their promises, but this is no apology for his doing so. Though every boy should strike back the blows of his associates, let it not shield yours in such guilt. Never permit your daughter to return anger for anger, but so educate her conscience that she shall be meek and forgiving, like Jesus.

Such is the long scale of the moral motives to be addressed by the parent. What wisdom does he need, where, if he commence low, he must ascend constantly higher! He may, he must, in some instances, "begin in the flesh"; but alas for his child, if he never go beyond that! Earnestly should he pray, that, with each advancing year of their intercourse, he may learn to touch the purest springs in his breast. Through lack of wisdom, the parent sometimes fosters those very propensities he must afterward repress. The subtle fox is brought in by his own hand among the tender grapes. He encourages untruth or ill temper by smiling at its first manifestations; he nourishes pride by excessive flattery. The mother cherishes a passion for finery of dress, which at length eats out the soul of her child, and

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"vanity of vanities" is written on her every step. Our children are sometimes taught anger and revenge by being trained to beat whatever does them harm, perhaps an innocent chair; and they learn cruelty by being allowed to torture helpless creatures. Insolence and tyranny are the fruit of an indulged rudeness to the beggar or the cripple. Envy of those richer than themselves, and jealousy of those below them, become the rank growth of parental conversation aimed at neighbours and rivals. Often does the unwary father or mother thus inflame low and unhallowed sentiments, and the little children are not suffered to come unto Christ. As we look on the parental relation, we see these immortal germs,

> "the buds of being, rise
> From cradle dreams, like snowdrops meek,
> While through their mind-illumined eyes
> A deathless principle doth speak;
> Already toward a brighter sphere
> They turn, from this terrestrial spot";—

and we cannot but cry from our hearts to their God-commissioned guardians, —

> "Fond parents! — florists kind and dear!
> Hinder them not."

What skill must we have to comprehend the motives of our children, and what conscientiousness do we need, to address only what is purest within them. In a family we find no two sons or daughters alike. The discipline that suits the disposition of one would

be pernicious to the other. The phlegmatic require stimulants, — the sanguine, restraints ; the mild must be treated tenderly, — the obstinate, with firmness. This boy is sordid, and you must therefore teach him generosity ; that boy is liberal to excess, and you must keep his purse from him. One must be encouraged, another kept back. How difficult to discriminate, how hard to be just ! Rare is the capacity of that mother who never misjudges, and is never unjust to her daughter ! Blessed faculty, when this delicate instrument, a child's mind, is before us !

> "To be master of the lute, and know
> How every note is touched."

Our motives are always mingled and complex. To thread the mazes of a human heart is given to but few. Yet how essential is this gift to the parent ! Let him covet it earnestly ; let him desire, let him pray without ceasing for, the grace of penetration ! If he can discern clearly between the good and the evil, and call forth none but pure feelings, correct purposes, holy impulses, generous dispositions in his child, then shall the virtue of that child be, not like the stream which rises in some parched land only to flow on for a season, and then be lost in the sand ; but it shall be a noble river, full to its banks, and rolling majestically on to the sea of eternity.

To reach that blessed consummation, direct your

child for his first and last motive in every act to the approbation of his God and Father. Point him to that Being who looks at his inmost heart, and who, when man misjudges us, always sees us aright, and knows our true deserts. Let him fear to offend him ; let him thirst for his favor, "as the hart panteth for the water-brooks." So shall he learn to live, not with eye-service, as a man-pleaser, but in singleness of heart ; and whatsoever he does will be done heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men. And then, in the day of the great vintage above, no insidious foes shall have spoiled the vines, but the fruit shall be abundant, and the ingathering shall give everlasting joy.

CHAPTER XII.

SYMPATHY WITH CHILDHOOD.

THE character of our Saviour is presented to us in the New Testament in the light of an example to the teacher and the parent. He is represented, in more than one instance, as being deeply interested in the young. Now he calls a little child to him and sets him in the midst of his disciples, and holds him up in his arms as a pattern of humility. And now, with a winning affection, he takes young children that were brought to him to his bosom, puts his hands upon them, and blesses them. These little ones never mistake their true friends; they knew Jesus was their friend, and most touchingly did they testify their attachment to him. For when he entered Jerusalem in triumph, we find the children crying in the temple, "Hosanna to the son of David!"

Observe how different was the reception given to little children by our Saviour and by those who stood around him The chief priests and the scribes were sore displeased at their hosannas. "Hearest thou," asked they, with contempt, "what these

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say ?" The reply of Jesus, while reproving them, at the same time exalts childhood. "Have ye never heard, Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings thou hast perfected praise ?" And his very disciples — so little did they enter into, or even comprehend, his appreciation of the young — rebuked those that brought children unto him. They thought it beneath his dignity to notice a child, or they were unwilling he should be delayed by such unimportant matters as blessing little children. How slow has the world been to correct this great error ! How comparatively few have had that hearty sympathy with the young which invites their approach and secures their confidence ! Age after age has come short of a true moral and religious education of the young, because they took their stand with the disciples. They did not open their hearts, and open their arms, like Jesus, and say to all who would repel them, "Suffer little children to come unto us, and forbid them not."

Were I called to write on the door-post of every house a sentence that should embody the law of parental instruction and discipline, it should be this : — *To teach a child well, you must have the spirit of a child.* It is not until, laying aside our manhood and going back to our own early days, we enter into his feelings, his mind becoming for the time our mind, and his heart our heart, that we can gain access to his inner being, and truly educate, that is,

call forth, the powers, sentiments, and faculties that are wrapped up within him.

The principle of adaptation, based upon sympathy, was admirably exhibited in the character and teachings of the Apostle Paul. Whatever class he approached, he threw himself, for the time being, into their precise situation. He had but one purpose, to bring all men to Christ. Therefore it was that unto the Jew he became as a Jew, that he might gain the Jews; and to the weak he became as weak, that he might gain the weak. In this high and pure sense he was "made all things to all men," and by such means did he save multitudes of souls.

By no other method than this can we save our children. The parent who keeps himself apart in spirit from his offspring never succeeds in acquiring a deep and permanent influence over them. "Of such," said Jesus, "is the kingdom of heaven"; and there is but one gate whereby we can enter that kingdom. If we are unwilling to stoop to the child, and become, like him, humble, docile, unambitious, then can we not instruct him. We need to be converted; we need to come down from our self-exaltation, to sit by his side, to catch his temper, to come into full sympathy with him. Then shall we be able to lead him to God and goodness.

The error of past times has been, to make the widest possible separation between teacher and pupil, parent and child. Our Pilgrim ancestors thought

it dangerous to encourage familiarity in the young. They imagined it would break down family authority, and destroy respect for fathers and mothers. Who is there in mid-life that has not experienced, or has not witnessed, at least, the unhappy effects of this error? To how many minds has it brought a cloud over the memory of a departed father! There was reverence, it is true, for that father; but love never entered the heart. We have the grand outlines of the Christian character in the picture left of him. There are stern principle, unbending integrity, truthfulness, fidelity, and justice; but the delicate shades and the softer tints of affectionate manners, pleasing tones, the ever-beaming countenance, that speaks of a childlike spirit, — these we miss.

I once saw at St. Paul's, in London, a gathering of some seven thousand children from the charity schools. They were neatly clad; their outward condition had been evidently cared for with a Christian liberality. The officials who had charge of them appeared all watchful and faithful to their trust. But one thing was wanting. Those children all wore a grave, not to say a sad countenance; their little hearts had never throbbed in response to a mother's tenderness; they bore the marks of no gentle intercourse with loving superiors; they had never felt a ray of genuine sympathy; charity seemed to have frozen their young being by that very touch which ministered to their bodies and their

minds. A short time since, I saw another gathering of thousands of children. It was in our own land, and in the metropolis of the most favored portion of that land. But how marked was the contrast! Here every face beamed with happiness. Not only was the apparel neat and entire, but the being it covered was manifestly replete with joy. The parents and teachers and patrons of the day were wreathed in smiles. Cheerfulness rang through the songs and speeches. Piety, purity, and benevolence were made gladsome themes on the occasion. Jesus was himself there; his benignant eye sent a benediction over that assembly; for there was none to rebuke, none to "forbid" the least of those children from coming up for the blessing poured forth through those childlike disciples.

An eminent writer has given us the clew to parental education in these three words,—"Discern, follow, lead." That is, first catch the thought in the child's mind; then go on with the same train a little way; and at last give it a new, though not an opposite, direction. But we cannot catch a child's thought unless, for the moment, we become children ourselves. If we look only for the maturity of manhood, we shall be sure of disappointment. If we demand of the little girl the judgment of a woman, then we lack the capacity to influence her mind. The parent, if he would touch the very springs of his child's life, must descend and condescend. In vain will he

hope to call forth his best nature while he keeps himself up in a higher region of thought and feeling. In many, perhaps most respects, on reaching manhood, we should put away childish things; but as teachers of the young we can do little except we still speak as a child, understand as a child, think and feel as a child.

There is a philosophy in this influence which the parent should fully understand. We are all affected more or less in our views and conduct by sympathy with others. We adopt easily the opinions of those whom we love; our tastes, also, influence our judgment. The likes and dislikes we entertain toward others induce us to shun or imitate their examples.

But if this be true of the adult, it is preëminently so of children. They are governed far less by reasoning, and even by principle, than they are by sympathy. Why is your little boy so easily led away to think and act like some boy in the streets, rather than like you? Because he fancies that boy, and probably loves him better than he does his own father. We hear mothers sometimes complain, that their little girls adopt the notions or imitate the manners of a domestic, instead of their own. There is no mystery in this; for they love that domestic. She takes more pains than their mother or sisters to interest them, by entering into their schemes and their feelings.

When you truly sympathize with your children in

all their little affairs, they connect pleasant associations with your opinions, and hence readily embrace them. They love to dwell on your character, and insensibly copy its traits. They catch the expression of your countenance, the tones of your voice, your manners and peculiarities ; they imitate what, if they did not love you, they would only mimic and ridicule.

The father gives his son set lectures upon good principles and conduct ; his arguments are all sound, and he thinks that is sufficient, — of course the boy will follow his advice. But, to his surprise, his counsels fail of their effect. Other persuasions, and other arguments, are daily leading him astray. And from whom do they proceed ? From some person, probably a companion of his own age, whom he loves. Nay, without any direct attempt to influence his opinions, or intention to corrupt him, you may find that mere contiguity to an evil but popular companion will pollute him. Indeed, as has been said with truth and force, " the great prevailing principle of the spread of vice is moral contagion."

It is not merely living with our children that will produce a sympathy with them. We may take our meals together, and sit by the same fireside, for years, and yet our hearts never come in contact with each other. Father and son may live on under one roof, and still their hopes and fears, their pleasures and pains, be entirely unlike. The son does not

enter the circle of his father's plans and feelings, and the father does not try to enter his ; and so they sit side by side, and walk and ride side by side, until the youth parts from his home, heart-strangers ! How is it possible there can be the best parental influences with this cold intercourse ? It is at best only command on the one part and obedience on the other.

The true relation between parent and child is that of free communication and entire confidence. The mother should interest herself in the pursuits and pleasures of her children, and never think to stand apart, in her dignity, from them. The father should talk with them, tell them stories, join in their sports, and thus imbed himself in their affections. If he allow himself to be so absorbed in his business as to neglect these things, let him not complain if they choose other associates than himself, and finally enter devious paths, and are lost. Many a boy has even been instructed well, and restrained abundantly, who afterward proved recreant to principle and virtue, simply because there was no love to sweeten his early instructions, and there were no inward ties which made the outward restraints appear wise and good.

Few parents sympathize aright with the troubles of their children. We are apt to think these troubles are all trivial ; but I believe we err. The child's reason is not developed like ours ; he cannot

so easily control his self-will ; the wishes of his parents seem to him, perhaps, incomprehensible ; and he is compelled, therefore, to put himself under the severest restraint to obey them. This is true of well-disciplined children. But what if the parent be weak, capricious, indolent, indulgent at one time and tyrannical at another ? What if he does not believe in the troubles of his child, and therefore never studies or soothes them ? The young heart is then thrown back on itself, and left only to submit and suffer. These are real trials, — trials which, seen in manhood, would awaken our sympathy ; and why should they not when witnessed in a child ?

Great power over children is gained by placing confidence in them. If they are distrusted, and subjected to constant suspicion and a petty blame, we at length render them miserable, and perhaps indifferent to all censure. Some children are naturally sensitive to blame, and it is both pernicious and cruel to goad such spirits with continual fault-finding. Others are made morbidly alive to censure by their parents. They have reason to feel that "your acid-sensitive and your coldly-querulous people need to have angels to live with them." How melancholy the spectacle of those daily propagating these very qualities in their families ! And sadder still is the thought, that not a few are doing it unconsciously, — they know not what manner of spirit they are of.

We put confidence in a child when we make some allowance for his errors and faults. Suppose we sometimes confess to him our own errors. It shows him that, when he does wrong, he has our sympathy; we do not stand proudly apart from him, as if we were perfect. This leads him to open his heart, acknowledge his wrong deeds, and cast himself on our justice and mercy. It thus gives us an immense influence over his character.

It is desirable, for our own sakes, to cherish a sympathy with childhood. We are brought by it into the buoyant and happy temper of that period of life. A thousand springs of innocent pleasure are open to one who truly loves little children. He possesses the genuine "elixir of life." He keeps himself perpetually young, by the exhilarating influence of youthful feelings. A house which has no children among its inmates becomes grave, dull, and gloomy. There is a sepulchral atmosphere about it, and the occupants grow prematurely old. The blankest selfishness forbids one to isolate himself from childhood.

On every account, parents should commence early a confidential intercourse with their children, and continue it up to their adult years. It is said that this feeling is natural to us while the child is very young. Custom should make it a "second nature" until they leave our roof. Let no stranger heart come in to supplant our place in their affections; let there

no break in the chain which binds our spirits to-
her. If we expect them to come toward us, and
w manly and womanly, we also must go toward
m, and become childlike, and keep ourselves
ithful. Then will the streams of all holy and sav-
influences, as they course through their hearts,
r the hues of a beautiful parental infusion.

CHAPTER XIII.

RECREATIONS, BOOKS, COMPANIONS, OCCUPATION.

THE parent should carry the spirit of childhood, joined to the wisdom of age, into the recreations he encourages in his children. We are apt to leave them, in these things, entirely to themselves. We provide schools for them, and we furnish them employment. These are grave objects, worthy our attention; but a child's sports, — they are but trifles. Why should we take any interest in such small affairs? Are they indeed small affairs? Is anything a trifle that affects their characters? Nay, is that unimportant which concerns merely their happiness? If we look at the various aspects of a child's recreations, we shall never treat them as beneath our notice.

In the first place, children must have amusements. God has so constituted them that they cannot possess health, buoyancy of spirits, elastic feelings, and a vigorous mind, without liberal recreations. A boy or a girl who has neither brother nor sister is usually sober, premature, in an undesirable condition. The

fraternal sympathies are essential to a perfect development of our virtue, no less than to our happiness. If the parents, however, cherish a youthful spirit, and participate in the sports of their lonely child, the defect may be partially supplied. In every family circle, father and mother should be, to some extent, playmates with their children. "For many years," said a parent, as he wept over a lost child, "I was not only the preceptor, but the playfellow, of my dear son; and many a gleeful hour have we passed together, either in trundling our hoops, whipping our tops, flying our kites, or brandishing our battledoors." Were this the ordinary practice, we should do much to secure the young against impure recreations, and we should throw a charm about their home which no length of years would efface from their memory.

Nor is this all; we should thus keep their minds open for our graver instructions; we should also prepare the way for an easier parental discipline. We desire obedience; and how can we so well secure it as by first securing a place in the heart of the child? Enter into that which interests your boy, and he will repay you with a new love. And "love is the mediator," as another has well said, "between power and dependence; that which meekens authority; that which ennobles submission. Only love can subdue the selfish will in either doing or forbearing; only this can give sweetness to command, and cheer-

fulness to obedience." To implant yourself in the affection and confidence of your children, share with them their amusements, become yourself a child. It will improve your own temper and disposition, and give you a lasting control over theirs.

I heard a father relate a method he had used of filling up a holiday of his children, which seemed to me both wise and well-principled. A muster was to be held in a neighbouring town; they desired to attend it, and asked his permission the evening before. "Well," said he, "you shall have a muster to-morrow." In the morning they rose early; he had them dressed neatly, and took the cars with them for Boston, and there had likenesses of himself and his five children taken by the Daguerreotype. "Now, children," said he, "is not this a good 'muster'? Here we are, all mustered together on this beautiful plate." So, by a little personal effort and sympathy, and by becoming a child for that day himself, he succeeded in keeping them away from those sights and sounds which kindle in the young mind a passion for war, and gave them also a most delightful recreation.

We desire the virtue of our offspring; let us then strive to render their home pleasant. A chastened facetiousness adds an attraction to the table and the fireside. The humor of the father is never forgotten; the repartee of innocent mirth throws a halo around the home of our early days. We may wander far from that dear roof, but the dream of it will

return sweetly on our memory. "The green field and the wooded lane" will come back to us, and "the shadow watched expectingly from the school-room window, as it shortens to the noontide hour. There will be family greetings, and thanksgiving feasts; there will be the grasp of friendship, there will be the kiss of love." And not the least of those dear reminiscences will be the forms of both honored and beloved parents, of a father planning with us some scheme of home recreation, — authority abandoned for the hour, and a sweet companionship in its place, — of a mother laying aside her serious cares, relaxing her brow, and blending in the charmed scenes of our guileless pastime. On such days Jesus looked with approbation. Joys so pure, and connected with such blameless associations, are a part of that great life which prepares both the little child and the man for His kingdom in whose presence is fulness of joy, and at whose right hand are pleasures for evermore.

We need the spirit of childhood to aid us in forming among our youth a taste for books and correct habits of reading. There are few of our native population who have not the ability to read. Years upon years our children are trained to this capacity in the schools. But how little is done in comparison to give a right direction to the use of this capacity! We influence our children enduringly through the books we encourage them to read, and by the man-

ner in which we invite or compel their perusal of them. The character at every age is very much swayed by our reading; in childhood it is often moulded decisively by this power. A good book not only imparts a knowledge of the right, but it incites to the performance of it. The parent who selects such a book for his child, and reads it to him, or hears him read it, or encourages him to read it alone, renders him a service which no length of time can appreciate.

If I desired, on the other hand, to mar the beauty of a child's character, by repelling him from God and duty, I would walk in their steps who, of old, in their unfortunate error, sought to force on their children the reading of religious books. I have heard of one who, before going to church, fastened her little children each in a chair, and put Bibles in their hands. One of them, it was said, soon learned the art of concealing a picture-book in his Bible, which he read of course with avidity. Milton tells us of certain teachers who present the young "at first with the most intellective abstractions of logic and metaphysics." As might be expected, they "*grow*," he says, "*into hatred and contempt of learning*." This result is quite as sure to follow from premature moral and religious reading, as from forcing the intellect by studies too advanced for a child's years.

I would advocate the parent's directing his child's

mind in the choice of books; but that direction should be given in sympathy with childhood. If we select grave books, those which are loaded with moral precepts, for the young, we repress the very disposition we would cherish. Perhaps Dr. Johnson went too far in his view of this subject, but there is wisdom in his language. "I would let a boy," says he, "at first read *any* book, because you have done a great deal when you have brought him to have *entertainment* in reading. . . . . Sunday," he continues, "was a heavy day to me when I was a boy. My mother confined me on that day, and made me read 'The Whole Duty of Man,' from a great part of which I could derive no instruction."

What numbers in after days lose even the desire to read profitable books! Not a few, indeed, seldom read anything more substantial than the newspaper, or at most the thin periodical. There is a waste of the results of education in this respect, which, in a nation so devoted as ours is to the "Economies," is truly amazing. Nor is the loss of time and money the chief sacrifice in the case. Our people lose — or rather, many of them never form — the taste for reading at all. In a world abounding with the printed records of human thought, they are blind to the glorious spectacle. They are walking daily over mines of untold wealth, the riches of science and literature, the treasures of history, philosophy, poetry, truth, and fiction, and yet they never penetrate

even the surface of the soil beneath their feet. The voice of wisdom sounds along the ages of the past, and the present utters its sweet melodies around them, but their heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing. They live and they die utterly neglectful of one of the dearest privileges, and one of the most inestimable tastes, which the Father has placed within our powers of acquisition.

But, beyond question, few ever acquire a taste for reading late in life. If the young man does not keep alive his interest in books, seldom does the old man revive it. Let it be neglected in childhood, and it is not often formed anew in riper years. How many merchants have retired from business with a fortune, but become restless and miserable without city excitements, because they had no love of books. With a fondness for reading, we need never experience *ennui*. We can always have company ; and we can choose our own society too ; you have but to go to your library, and in whatever mood, whether cheerful or sad, languid or excited, you can select a companion suited to the hour. You have materials for thought, subjects for conversation, fountains of happiness opening up around you, pure and perennial.

What parent, then, will not do all he can to cultivate in his children this delightful and ennobling taste ? As an instrument of personal improvement, as a means of suggesting good thoughts, imparting

correct principles, and cherishing right dispositions and affections in the child and the man, I would urge every parent to incite both his sons and daughters to a love of reading. The books they peruse will tell on their characters for ever. They will be pious or thoughtless, benevolent or selfish, pure or impure, to a very great degree, according as their early guardians shall influence their reading.

To secure the greatest benefit from this habit, the parent must mould his child's taste by first becoming a child himself. I have known those who required their children to read aloud to them such books as suited their own mature minds. They desired a personal gratification, or thought, perhaps, to do the child good by compelling him to pore over a grave and solid work. How unwise this course! Turn back, you who would do thus, to your own childhood. Did you take pleasure at that age in reading works on theology, moral treatises, or dry history? Why, then, constrain this boy to do it now? If you would do him good, let him select his own book; that he will read with interest; and though it appear childish to your sober years, yet bear the privation cheerfully, for so you may help this child to form a taste which will go with him through life, and fill him with joy, and quicken him to an unfading excellence.

Carry the same spirit into the formation for your children of their companionships. "There is," as has been well observed, "a mysterious power which

discovers and selects friends for us in our childhood." We know not the affinities by which two little girls incline to one another; "sit together in school; walk together after school; tell each other their manifold secrets, and write long and impassioned letters to each other in the evening." But something may be done to guide this selection. The conversation of the family may turn often on its importance. Questions may be put in regard to those whose society a child seeks and enjoys, like these: — Is he a good boy? Does he give you good advice? Is his language pure? Does he set you the right example? We can sometimes see a change in our children on adopting a new companion. According as it is for the better or the worse, so should we comment upon it.

The character of a child, while he is in society, should be "like an upright, elastic tree, which bends, accommodating itself a little to each wind on every side, but never loses its spring and self-dependent vigor." Neighbourhood has a vast inflence on the characters of our children. There seems to be a fatalism — if the Christian may ever apply that word to his circumstances — in the class by which a boy or girl happens to be surrounded. If they are pure, so is he or she; if they are noisy, profane, vulgar, or untruthful, happy for us if our own children become not like them. It requires wisdom, here as everywhere else, to excite and to restrain, in due

proportions ; but one grand rule the conscientious parent must firmly adopt. At the risk of offending the nearest relative, or most valued friend on earth, and however painful to himself or his child, he should never permit him to associate intimately with one who he sees and knows is, both by example and persuasion, infusing a daily poison into his moral life-blood.

Notice the earliest biases of your children in regard to a future occupation. There are parents who predetermine what employment a son shall pursue. Perhaps he is to enter a store, study a profession, or acquire some trade. They come to this decision from their own point of view alone. Were it not wiser to set aside their own tastes and preferences, and look directly at their child ? What are his physical energies, what is his mental capacity, and what his prevailing inclination ? If he desire a pursuit that is honest and honorable, then why throw impediments in his way ?

The only case in which a parent can safely forbid his child to choose an occupation for himself is that of his being governed in his choice by fashion, by companions, or by other influences, independent entirely of his personal qualifications. Taste and capacity usually indicate a boy's destiny in regard to an occupation. Where they are evidently at variance with each other, the parent must exercise his authority, and decide what shall be his son's pursuit

But close observation and judicious management will ordinarily bring the views of parent and child into harmony on this important subject.

The moral influence of every calling in life a faithful parent will always regard. Teach your boy that he was not sent into this world by his Heavenly Father merely to make money, but that character is to be first, midst, and last, in every plan he shall form. Two things must be indelibly stamped on his mind. First, that no pursuit is laudable, not though it yield the riches of the West and East combined, which presents irresistible temptations either to fraud or to avarice. The other point is this : — Your son must have some regular occupation. "He who merely hangs as a burden on the shoulders of his fellowmen, who adds nothing to the common stock of comfort, and only spends his time in devouring it," is not only "a public nuisance," but an offender against God as well as man. The little child is a model of industry. Let his spirit, cherished by ourselves, be carried forward through every succeeding period ; for industry, it cannot be too often repeated, is a moral safeguard, and a religious duty ; it is a source of unfailing happiness, and a prerequisite for that kingdom whose type and temper, in this respect, as in many others, are seen now in the little child.

CHAPTER XIV.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION.

In concluding the chapters upon the motive powers to be employed in the education of the young, I spoke of the approbation of God as the highest and purest of all possible motives. This being true, the great aim of the parent should be to awaken in his child's mind a sense of the Divine presence, and to lead him to refer every action of his life to Him. Whatever other graces or virtues he may strive to call forth in him, they should be regarded but as planets in a great moral system, whose sun and centre is personal piety. His education is to begin, continue, and terminate — so far as education can ever terminate — with his relations to our common God and Father. We may set before our children other and subordinate inducements, such as a desire for human approbation, the preparation for this life, the desire of property, or the love of other persons; but we are never to rest in these. We must teach them to look into their own hearts continually, and from them to look up to Him who searcheth and knoweth every secret thing.

The Author of our nature has indicated the parental duty in this respect by the very constitution of the child. He has made the infant mind capable of knowing something of himself. There are instincts which draw the young being, almost from his cradle, up to the Father. He is then susceptible to impressions from all sources, but from none are they so deep and so strong as from this. The love called forth by a mother's voice expands naturally into a love for the Divine Parent. Every pure affection is a part of the rich soil in which the spiritual may be sown, and from the germs of this mortal existence there may spring up an everlasting life. When you speak of heavenly things, the child sits at your feet a willing listener ; and, as face answers to face in a glass, so he reflects back your devoutest word and your most pious emotion.

This is true of every relation in which we may choose to represent the Divine Being. Do we speak of Him as a witness, — as one who can see our inmost thought and feeling ? This is at once received as true ; the man may doubt and question and disbelieve, but the little child at once believes. He is full of inquiries and speculations in regard to what he sees and hears around him. There are things which seem to him incredible ; he will ask of the account you give him, or of the story he reads, in which marvels occur in relation to men, " Is this true ? " But when you tell him of God, of his uni-

versal presence, his unbounded power and knowledge, you have but to employ some simple illustration, like that in which Jesus compares the operations of the Divine Spirit to the wind, and you find him predisposed to accept it. Though he cannot see God, yet readily does his mind believe, and his heart joyfully respond to it, "Thou, God, seest me."

Do we represent this omniscient Being as a moral Judge? Do we say he will bring secret things to light, and reward the innocent and punish the guilty? Every such statement meets from the child a response. He has an intuitive perception of justice in his own breast, and most readily does he confess that God must be more just than man, and the eyes of the Lord must behold the good and the evil. He believes not only that God is, but that he is the rewarder of all who do right. This truth is not with him a matter of argument, but of faith. How often, when we go about coldly to reason of God, and become "in endless mazes lost," do we blush as we look on the little child, and see his steady and beautiful trust!

But preëminent is the disposition of the child to regard God as a Father. His experience of the filial relation qualifies him to receive the purest and best of beings as a Parent. Teach him his entire dependence, and begin with the simplest illustrations. Say to him, "Put your finger on your wrist, and

notice the pulse ; who causes it to beat ? You do not do it yourself ; neither can it beat by its own power. Observe the constancy and regularity of your breath. Who sustains this marvellous play of the lungs ? " The child, like the philosopher, will answer, " It is, it must be, an Almighty Power." It needs no deep metaphysics, it needs only an incorrupt heart, to say, with the pious Quarles, " God blows the bellows ; we only touch the keys." The great truth discovered by Newton commends itself to the youngest of minds, that all nature obeys a single law, and that it is God in whom " we live, and move, and have our being."

The paternal character of God is nowhere more strikingly illustrated than amid the scenes of Nature. At every period of our lives,

> " the air, the fruit, the flower,
> Doth own to us a high, superior charm."

And this power is apparent at every changing season.

> " Mark the soul's radiance, in the wintry hour,
> Fling a sweet summer halo round us, warm."

And

> " when nature dresses,
> There seems a kindly feeling in it, as though
> A spirit of goodness peeped from out the earth
> To shield decay."

Nothing is better suited to awaken spiritual feelings than communion with the works of God. The smallest child can comprehend the need of sun and

showers, of light and warmth, to call forth the verdure of spring. He can see, that, without these, man would toil on the earth in vain. And he can be made early to feel what a debt we owe to the Author of these gifts. He has but to pass a few years on this planet, when the mighty truth will dawn upon him, that day and night, seed-time and harvest, cold and heat, run a never-tiring, never-failing round; and he will see the finger of God so moving this earthly ball as to produce these grand results.

"I shall not be contradicted," says Paley, "when I say that, if one train of thinking be more desirable than another, it is that which regards the phenomena of nature with a constant reference to a supreme, intelligent Author. The world thenceforth becomes a temple, and life itself one continued act of adoration." What, then, so important as the cultivation of this spirit in childhood? The man may dwell in the very midst of these glorious tokens of God's presence and goodness, and still never feel their power. Habit may blunt his perceptions; sensuality may dim his spirit; care and labor may engross his whole being. How essential, therefore, is it, to preoccupy the mind in youth with this sublime subject!

If I regarded the happiness of my child alone, I would cherish in him a love of Nature. For in all years it affords the pure taste an exquisite pleasure to visit her green fields, and walk through her deep forests, and wander by her silvery streams. There

is no joy beyond his who looks lovingly on the ever-rolling heavens and the dear, old moon, with her starry train. Deep and substantial are his gratifications, who delights at times to flee from the hum and fret of the busy world, and listen to the wood-bird wild, and gather the gentle flowers, and inhale the delicious perfumes, of each blossoming tree and shrub. Majestic are his thoughts, and noble his pleasures, who looks out with sympathy on the mighty ocean, and bathes his spirit in the music of its world-filling symphonies. But higher, because holier, is his joy, who, as he luxuriates amid the riches of nature, feels in every scene the silent and sacred aspiration, "My Father made them all."

As a moral safeguard, I would cherish in the young a love of Nature. When they have once drank in her beauty, the scenes of folly and guilt become less and less attractive to them. She inspires a taste for tranquil joys; and amid her soothing influences the boy is happy, and the youth never thirsts for the exciting and corrupting pleasures of the inebriate and the gamester and the debauchee. Cherish in your daughter a love of flowers, those apostles of piety and purity; give her a little plot in the garden to cultivate for herself. Take your children to ride, now in midwinter, when the snows are preaching their spiritual discourses, and the ice-king celebrates his coronation, and now when the leaf and bud are bursting their cerements. Walk with them in sunny

days, when the bee and the bird chant their rich anthems, and fill their souls with the glorious hues of the autumn foliage, and with the rainbow-tints of its manifold fruits. Let the heart be thus early preoccupied by the works of God, and it is thrice armed against the pollutions of society. The memory of these delicious hours will go with your children as a talisman amid future temptations, and to their last hour they will turn gratefully to those pleasant scenes associated with parental and fraternal forms, and with youthful recreations that leave no sting behind.

We have an aid to spiritual instruction furnished by that love of the forms and institutions of religion which is so natural in childhood. Some contend that a child should not be taken to church before he can understand the sermon. To such I would say, that if the *habit* of attending church is ever to be formed, it can be done most easily in childhood. How often do we hear it said, "I was brought up to go to church from a child; the question was never asked whether I should go or not, and therefore I love to go now." We should "choose" for our children, as for ourselves, "what is most proper; custom will render it most agreeable." As respects a child's not understanding the sermon, I would answer, that we go to church, or should go, to worship, not primarily to hear a sermon. The little child should be taught this, and he should be led to practise accordingly. He can enter into the spirit of the

prayer and of the singing, if he does not understand their words, and it is good to bring him into the atmosphere of these sacred services.

Besides, there are few who do not enjoy at that period attendance at church. The varying exercises of the prayer, the sacred song, and the sermon, attract and interest them. Let this disposition be sedulously encouraged. Teach your children to join in each portion of the services; never allow them to go to church for the sake of conversation while there, or to read a book, or gaze listlessly around them. They should reverence the sanctuary, and realize — while there, if they do not anywhere else — that the eye of God is upon them. Lead them by your own example to prize these religious privileges. I cannot but think, that, did parents frequent the church constantly themselves, and speak of it as a privilege, and talk with their children about the discourse, they might make it the centre of a life-enduring interest; and its doors would thus be thronged with regular and earnest worshippers, and preachers would be cheered and people quickened to an unaccustomed devoutness; and so in the end not only the church, but the world, would become consecrated ground.

The children in our age are connected almost universally with the Sunday school. The good this will accomplish depends, however, very much on the parent. If fathers and mothers exert themselves to send their children constantly, and if they coöp-

erate with the teacher by frequent conversations at home on the exercises of the school, then this institution will be a nursery of genuine piety. It will lay deep the foundations, and build high the walls, of these living temples of God. But the mere existence of a Sunday school in a parish cannot save our youth ; it exerts no spell, it cannot coerce the children ; it is but a voluntary agency.

We have the testimony of a minister at large, showing that the Sunday school may fail of its end. "I have repeatedly interrogated on this point," he says, "even the lads and others who have been arraigned as offenders against our laws ; and it is seldom that they have not acknowledged themselves, or been proved, on satisfactory evidence, to have been no strangers within the walls of a Sabbath school." What a startling fact is this ! It shows clearly that we cannot lean on the Sunday school, as many apparently now do, with safety, for the *whole* moral and religious education of our youth. It reveals a fearful amount of parental delinquency, and shows that home may counteract the best of other institutions for the young.

When all it calls upon meet the demand, when our young men and young women are encouraged and induced to take classes in the school for their own moral benefit, as well as the children's, it does great good. But when fathers and mothers sacrifice somewhat of their own comfort and convenience,

and come joyfully to the work of the Sunday school, and carry forward also the same work at the fireside, then it is a blessed institution ; then we cannot easily exaggerate its beneficent influence.

The failures of the Sunday school may be traced to what I regard as a growing error in all our systems of education. It is the evil of placing the culture of the intellect higher than that of the affections, and of the moral and religious character in general. Milton affirms that "all wickedness is weakness" ; this is substantially true. It is in vain to load the intellect with knowledge, or to develop any of its powers, if you leave the spiritual nature unaffected. The knowledge of God is the highest knowledge ; and that is to be gained not so much from books as from religious culture and personal piety. Unless you add to his Sunday-school instructions a corresponding development of a child's moral and religious principles, you do very little to secure him against temptation and sin. Hand in hand with his mental improvement should go the progress of his character in piety, purity, and love. He should reflect as much as he reads, and learn to do right as he advances from stage to stage in his religious lessons.

Having spoken of the hours a child passes at church and in the Sunday school, the question suggests itself, How shall he occupy the remaining part of the Sabbath ? I would say, let Sunday be made

a pleasant day, and combine with this influence as much profit as possible. This day should be marked by some difference from all others. Take the lowest view of it, regard it only as a period for rest, and you must distinguish it from that portion of time devoted to labor. The first thing to be secured is quiet. If there be loud conversation, noisy movements, a bustle with playthings, then the Sabbath is, to all good purposes, obliterated.

The day was given to refresh and elevate the mind. It is not, then, sufficient to keep it by abstinence from manual labor, and by bodily repose. We need also "a Sabbath of the *soul.*" Consequently, children should not be permitted to read frivolous books. If the novel be laid aside on this day by the Christian adult, as it is presumed to be, why should the trifling story-book be given to the child? Keep in mind that Sunday is for the spirit as well as the body, and you can easily decide how a child ought to spend it. What he does outwardly is not the whole, nor the best part, of his observance of the day. A walk at sunset, amid the fair works of God, or a visit to a sick or a poor neighbour, will often do a child as much spiritual good as the sanctuary or the Sunday-school hours. Let the day be filled up with a variety of employments; it matters little what the particular act is, so it be quiet, and tend to purify the heart, lifting it toward the Father, and enlarging its love to man.

Some of us have happy reminiscences of an hour spent each Sunday, while we were children, in repeating hymns together in the family circle. We remember the venerated form of a father, as he directed the exercise, and the dear face and pleasant tones of a prompter mother. There, also, sat brothers and sisters, some of whom are now parted by seas or lands from that early home, and some have gone up to that long home where we hope to meet again and reunite our voices in sacred exercises. Let us prepare our own children to join in that heavenly service. We shall thus add a new and unfading association, one as pure as it is sweet, to the memories of home.

For many reasons, children should be encouraged to store their minds well with sacred poetry. They will find, as we often have, that a verse of some hymn, learned in childhood, will come up occasionally to fill a vacant moment, to soothe us in the night-season to sleep, or to arm us in the morning for the work we are to do. These treasures are dwelt upon in moments of suffering, gloom, and anxiety. They recur to us in bereavement and affliction; they lead us to penitence and peace; they arouse the spirit to fortitude; they often renew, and sometimes create, a beautiful trust in Providence. The hymn they learned at home will be a talisman to our children, — it may be their spiritual mentor through life. Let us not leave it to the

Sunday school alone, nor to any one beyond our own fireside, to provide for them this precious possession.

We are led naturally to say here, that nothing can supersede the demand for daily personal religious instruction on the part of the parent. The idea of God should be blended with every event in the life of a child. It is not by set lectures or forced conversations, but by casual remarks, that the most permanent impressions are made on the mind. The conscience of the child is always active, and, did the parent watch its operations, a single word might often turn the current toward God and the right. Has your son done wrong, at the quiet hour of his retiring to rest, speak of it as displeasing to his Father in heaven. Then conscience is tender, and your admonition will sink into the springs of his being and action. Accustom him to blend the thoughts of heaven and immortality with pleasant scenes. Whenever he is happy, introduce allusions to our Heavenly Father, — trace his every experience up to that kind Being. Do not reserve all reference to religion to times of sorrow, bereavement, and grief, but connect it with gladsome events. It will then present itself naturally in the hour of trouble. That Divine face will be familiar, and that spirit-voice will soothe and sustain amid the deep waters, and the feeble one shall not sink, but rise and receive a new spiritual vigor.

CHAPTER XV.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION. — CONTINUED.

I AM prompted in this place to speak of the subject of death. This event is invested by most Christians with gloom and terror. It is represented in an entirely different aspect from that given to it by our Saviour. We profess to believe that the departed good are still alive, and are in a happier and better world. Yet we clothe ourselves in black, and shun the room where they died; we speak of them with compassion, as if a calamity had befallen them; and we utter heart-rending sobs, and suffer our tears to flow without restraint.

But if a departed friend has merely passed on, gone to the spirit-land a little before us, why should we speak and appear and feel as though the separation was eternal? Our children receive only the darkest impressions of death from our deportment. Can we not do something to change this melancholy condition of the Christian world? Shall we not exert ourselves to present more elevated and spiritual views of the dead to the young?

Let the parent revolve frequently in his mind these great truths. Death is not the extinction of our being; it is only one among several changes through which we pass. All must die; why, then, should we not treat this event as a natural one, and speak of it familiarly? If we are virtuous and devout, death will be to us a blessed change. To go to our Father in heaven, to see and dwell with Jesus, to meet the best men who have ever lived, to be reunited to our lost relatives and friends, — what is it but a privilege? It will, indeed, give us grief to part from the dear ones we leave behind; but how short will be our separation! We cannot but weep over the dead, but it should be only with moderation, as for a brief absence on a journey.

There are but two things which can account for the terrors we now feel at the thought of death. The first is, a sense of unfitness for the exchange of worlds; "the sting of death," so far as this view is concerned, "is sin." But a comparatively small share of our gloom comes from that source. Most of us do not dread so much to be dead as to die. This dread is, to a great extent, unnatural, and produced by circumstances within our control.

The second cause of our terror is an injudicious education. Why do so many pious people, who have a firm trust in God, fear to die? It may be partly constitutional, but it is far more the result of early associations. Darkness and gloom, and a mys-

terious terror, were written on the faces of their parents and teachers at the mention of death. Hence they now strive in vain to array it with cheerfulness. Reason and religion are too feeble to do this; and their only resource is to drive the subject from their thoughts as far as possible. They are unwilling to speak of the death of a relative, still more of their own dissolution. They cannot, perhaps, bring themselves to adjust their affairs by making a will. They feel an invincible repugnance at considering anything even remotely connected with this banished topic.

Let us earnestly hope that our children are not to be trained up in this servile fear of death. Its tendency is to prevent all meditation on a future state, to throw a shade over every path of life, to enfeeble the mind, and to depress the whole character. That a child might be so educated as to escape these mournful evils is evident. Miss Hamilton gives us two examples, in her work on education, which show that this is practicable.

The first is that of a noble lady, who received in infancy an impression of terror at death; and this impression was aggravated by injudicious language in the nursery, until this event became associated with all the images of horror which her imagination could conceive. This effect was never afterward removed, although she possessed a strong mind, and had received a superior education.

"Exemplary in the performance of every relig-

ious and social duty, full of faith and good works," yet "she never dared to dart a glance of hope beyond the tomb. And when sickness brought the subject to her view, her whole soul was involved in a tumult of horror and dismay. It became the business of her family and friends to devise methods of concealing from her" the least "real danger. Every face was then dressed in forced smiles, and every tongue employed in the repetition of flattering falsehoods. To mention the death of any person in her presence became a sort of petit treason in her family. She might, indeed, be said

'To die a thousand deaths in fearing one.'

And she had often suffered much more from the apprehension, than she could have suffered from the most agonizing torture that ever attended the hour of dissolution."

Let us now look at a case of an opposite character. A lady, whose cheerfulness and composure, on the threatened approach of death, was spoken of in her presence with admiration, remarked thus: — "The fortitude you so highly applaud, I indeed acknowledge as the first and greatest of blessings; for to it I owe the enjoyment of all the mercies which a good Providence has graciously mingled in the cup of suffering. But I take no merit to myself on its account. It is not, as you suppose, the magnanimous effort of reason; and however it may be sup-

ported by that religious principle which inspires hope and teaches resignation, while I see those who are my superiors in every Christian grace and virtue appalled by the terrors of death, I cannot attribute my superior fortitude to religion alone. For that fortitude I am, under God, chiefly indebted to the judicious friend of my infancy, who made the idea of death not only familiar, but pleasant, to my imagination. The sudden death of an elderly lady, to whom I was much attached, gave her an opportunity, before I had attained my sixth year, of impressing this subject on my mind in the most agreeable colors."

The world is full of instances that show the power we have over children, to excite or to allay in them a thousand petty alarms and foolish fears and groundless apprehensions. We should cultivate in them an habitual calmness and tranquillity of temper. This will do much to prepare them to take right views of death. It is well to take a child to funerals quite young, and to explain to him, as early as possible, all you can in relation to the departed. Were these occasions conducted more in the spirit of Christianity, it would be easy to give our children correct impressions on this subject. Suppose the relatives of the deceased were to dress in light instead of dark garments, and to think and speak, not of their own loss, but of the gain of the ascended one ; suppose the coffin was laid on a bright hearse, and covered with a white pall, and the pastor should speak and

ay as Jesus would, and turn off the mind from the dy, and fasten it upon the spirit; — how much uld these few changes do to take away the gloom ich now gathers around the grave!

I rejoice that in this age we see, in many instan-, the body surrounded with fair flowers, and our meteries adorned and made cheerful. Let all our rangements in relation to the dead correspond with is grateful change. Let no word or look come in mar this new impression. Parents cannot expend o much thought on this topic. Did they give their ildren no other instruction, they would do well in ving them bright views of death. Could they train em no farther, this were a blessed work to raise em so near to their Saviour that they should be delivered from the bondage of the fear of death."

Do not dwell on general topics, but be minute and rticular; the bread of heaven must be broken into all fragments, or it will not nourish a child. You ay say to him, God is good; but that is a vague ea. Show him how the hand of God gave him me particular thing, raised him from sickness, or ved him in danger; this is a definite object, and e will never forget the occasion. The inductive ethod, as in philosophy, so in education, is the only fe method. It is the only course to render a child incerely pious. He can be made to repeat cate-hisms, and go over dogmas and abstractions inter-minably, and yet not one genuine emotion of love to

God be awakened by it in his breast. He is then the mere echo of your voice; you make him express what he never yet felt. Shun this fatal error; whatever he repeats or does or says in the name of God and Christ, be sure it comes from the heart. And, to gain that assurance, let his own life be the great mine where you dig for the heavenly treasure. Connect what he has himself seen, heard, thought, and felt with your religious instructions, and you imbed them in his character.

The remarks now made apply with great force to the exercise of prayer. Children usually take pleasure in the repetition of forms; but let it not be the *mere* form which excites their interest. This can be easily avoided; for how often do we see a little child, whose intellect is yet undeveloped, become irradiated with light and beauty, while he pours forth his own happy prayers! He will take pleasure in repeating after you the simple form, "Now I lay me down to sleep." And soon he loves to express his prayer in his own language. I have heard of a little girl who knelt down of her own accord, when undressed to go to bed, and said, "Our Father who art in heaven, forgive me for striking my little brother to-day, and help me not to strike him again; for O, if he should die, how sorry I should be that I struck him."

It is well to teach children to follow us in prayer, word by word; yet let us never end with this. I

would have a child taught to pray in his own language also. Let the form lead him up to a still higher elevation. When he has the spirit of prayer, the form becomes sanctified. Unite the two methods, and you teach him to pray without ceasing.

"Hold the little hands in prayer, teach the weak knees their kneeling;
Let him see thee speaking to thy God; he will not forget it afterward;
When old and gray will he feelingly remember a mother's tender piety,
And the touching recollection of her prayers shall arrest the strong man in his sin."

I close this enumeration of the instrumentalities of domestic religion by recommending to the parent an habitual reference to the Bible, as a light and support in the discharge of his arduous duties. That should be the code from which he draws his every rule and precept, and the sanction he refers to at all times. Present Jesus Christ as the model for your child, and induce him to prize the record of his life, to reverence his character, to be grateful for his sacrifice, and love his memory.

A love of the Bible should be cherished in childhood. That book should be held up as the banner of success, both for this life and the life to come. To how many has it brought treasures, by its influence on their principles and character, on earth as well as in heaven! We are told of a certain Quaker

in France, that he was once waited upon by four of his workmen, to receive their usual new year's gifts. "Well, my friends," said he, "here are your gifts; choose either fifteen francs or the Bible." "I don't know how to read," said the first, "so I take the fifteen francs." "I can read," said the second, "but I have pressing wants." He then took the money. The third also made the same choice. He now came to the fourth, a lad of about fourteen. The Quaker looked at him and asked, "Will *you* take these three pieces, which you can earn any time by your labor?" "As you say the book is good," replied the boy, "I will take it, and read it to my mother." He took the Bible, opened it, and found between the leaves a gold piece of forty francs. How few lads would have done like him! and yet, by taking that Bible, he made himself richer than his associates, for this world no less than the next.

Parents, do all in your power to make your children love this precious volume better than silver and gold. For this purpose, read it with them, not in course, but with wise selections. Let it not be a strange work, but let it be adverted to, its authority recognized, and its spirit imbibed continually. Never allow the flashy literature of the day to crowd out the sacred volume. Remember that what the spinal column is to the body, — its main pillar, its prime support, its life-channel, — the Bible is to the soul of your child.

And here the question may be raised, "What doctrines are we to teach our children from the Bible?" Some may ask, "Shall we teach them any doctrines whatever?" I reply, that every child should be taught absolute doctrines, that is, religious truths. But the less of controversial doctrines we inculcate — especially upon young children — the better. Give them distinct ideas in regard to God, and Christ, and man, and their various relations to each other. But let these ideas be taken fresh from the Bible itself, not from any creed, or any church, or any sect upon earth. We should never embarrass a child with conflicting dogmas. It is better to give him one single, simple view of a divine truth, and let his mind rest on that.

"Whose view," it will be asked, "shall we give him?" We can honestly give him no other than our own. What seems to us, after a diligent and prayerful search of the Scriptures, to be true, that we should teach our children. It may not be the pure truth; but if it is as pure as we can obtain, that is sufficient. Let the child receive it at first, as he does other things from us, on authority. If we teach him error, he will have an opportunity in future years to detect it. And it is better to teach a child some errors, than to give him no truth. It is a sad mistake, and a calamity to the character, to have no clear views of religious truth implanted in childhood.

But while we impart truth to the mind, let us fill the heart also with charity. A child should be made to believe that there are Christians in all denominations, and that he is never to avoid another person, or to feel unkindly toward him, on account of his religious opinions. Infuse early into the spirit a tolerance as broad as that felt by our Saviour toward the Samaritan and the heathen ; and let this liberal temper shine out from your own heart and conversation. We may derive great aid in this course from the growing liberality of the Christian community. Less and less is thought of creeds, and more and more of character, every year that passes. So may it ever be ; while we seek the truth, and lead our children also to do it, let us be careful to grow in charity. We can promote this good cause by encouraging them to associate with those of different denominations. Let them join, too, in the philanthropic enterprises of the day. Children who feel a common interest in temperance, freedom, and peace, in relieving the poor, reforming the vicious, and assisting all who suffer, cannot be deeply estranged by a mere diversity of doctrinal opinions.

Let religion be presented to your children, not as a thing to be simply respected, but as a personal, individual concern ; not as an occasional visitor, but as an ever-present friend, a never-failing guide. The master painter always has one figure in his group around which all the rest cluster, and to which

the eye ever returns. Let personal piety be the central figure in the character of your child. The world, its gains, honors, pleasures, may wait round it, and while they do its bidding they fill their place. But woe to that youth who puts either of these as the central figure in his life-picture! It is sad to think how often this is done; it is mournful to witness these attempts to unite God and Mammon, the flesh and the spirit, self and duty.

"God and the world we worship both together;
Draw not our laws to him, but his to ours;
Untrue to both, so prosperous in neither,
The imperfect will brings forth but barren flowers."

Do not encourage in your child this fatal compromise. Set up religion as supreme; let the question never be raised, "Which am I to take, God or man, for my guide?" Show him the Father, habitually, and say, "*There* is your law."

And, to give effect to your instructions, take that holy Being as your own monitor and guide. You can do little without personal religion. How can you render these children grateful to God, if you never feel that gratitude yourself? The words of pious instruction will often freeze on your lips; your very countenance will betray the coldness of your heart. But, O, if you first love and live in the Father, then when you speak of him to your child your face will be as the face of an angel. Nay, your very silence will be eloquent with instruction; for he

sees God in your eye, and reads of him in your every feature.

Now, then, while the wax is warm, set the seal of God in these youthful hearts. If you do not feel qualified to teach them of heavenly things, enter the great normal school of Jesus Christ, and begin your preparation. Life is short, and why should you delay? Be pious yourself, and ask the Father, and he will enable you to render them pious also. Then will they be fitted for the stern tasks of this life; and honor, virtue, success, and well-doing will be their meed at every stage. Or if they be taken early from you, they shall go forth in celestial apparel, and with praise on their faltering tongues. Or if you be called first, you will enjoy the sweet recollection of a persevering fidelity in training them up for earth and for heaven. And, as scene after scene fades from your vision, and the ties to this world, one and another, seem to fail and break, the last will be that which binds you to your children; and as that link, too, is being severed, you will trustfully commit them to that Divine Parent with whose guardian love they are already filled, and who assures you he will be their deliverer in the temptations of life, their refuge in its storms, and their high and unending reward.

CHAPTER XVI.

DOMESTIC WORSHIP.

It is an ancient custom, to be traced back to that thrice-happy family who dwelt in Eden, and continued down through patriarchs, prophets, and kings, for the master of each household to offer up with them, morning and evening, the incense of prayer unto God. The custom was sanctioned from above, and is beautiful in itself. What, indeed, is more natural, what more becoming or more truly beneficial, than worship at the family altar? In attempting to enumerate its advantages, one is soon lost amid their numbers and claims.

Here is a circle who share the same mercies from Heaven, surround one board, mingle in common interests, pleasures, and pursuits. They rise in the morning, and go forth to their labors from a single abode. When evening comes on, they gather themselves together and lie down in their dwelling beneath the same sheltering wing. And can they withhold their gratitude? Can they, if they consider their condition, go each to the duties of the

day, unmindful of the Father of them all? Does no inward monitor bid them assemble for prayer? Shall there be no act by which they recognize their common dependence upon God? And when the toils of the day are over, does not nature call upon them to commit themselves, by some general, social service, to the care of Him who never slumbers or sleeps? Is it enough, even, that each retire to his closet, and send up his petitions and acknowledgments in solitude? O, no! Religion, reason even, says no. Wisdom herself crieth at their doors, "Let there be some voice of thanksgiving ascending in the name of them all to Him who has watched and preserved and blessed them together. Let him who is placed in Providence at the head of these brethren speak unto the Lord in their behalf, and bear up for them a token of praise and love."

In a family are found individuals who have equal wants. They all need daily the bounties of God, — life, health, friends, peace of mind, the possession of reason and conscience, and a mutual love. And these are the most precious of all human possessions. How befitting their relation, then, that they present, each day that returns, their united and hearty petitions for these gifts! Shall the morning dew, as it ascends on high, bear up no holy words from them? Shall the setting sun, the hour of nightfall, and the season for rest, pass by, and they remain prayerless? A large portion of our blessings consist of social

enjoyments, and all of them derive, to some extent, their value and relish from being shared with others. Can we, then, keep silence before Him who gives us all we have? Nay, if our minds perceive their wants, and our hearts feel how much we owe to our Universal Father, we shall be constrained to join in prayer. We shall sometimes, in a full view of our heaven-born happiness, feel that we *cannot* withhold a tribute of gratitude and praise for this happiness

How much, again, do their united devotions serve to promote a spirit of forbearance and forgiveness among those who are of one household. There is much in our intercourse even with those nearest ourselves, that demands a kind and patient temper. Our opinions sometimes differ. Our constitutional temperaments and our natural dispositions are of all possible varieties. If there be no one in the circle who strives to ward off exciting topics, none to yield contested points, and none who are willing to bear and forbear, who does not see that in many instances a house must be divided against itself? But on whom does this duty devolve? Not, surely, upon a portion of the family alone. The mere fact that a particular individual is the oldest, or the head of the family, does not exempt him from mildness and concessions. Still less, because he has superior strength, does Christianity allow him to trample on the feelings, or disregard the comfort, of all under his roof. No;

the youngest and the feeblest has rights, no less than himself. But how shall he be persuaded of this? How, rather, shall he be prevented from ever usurping what belongs unto them all? We answer, Let there be an altar set up in that house, and let the master of the family go daily unto it. With meekness and confession let him pour forth his soul with theirs. Let him remind himself that *his* Master also is in heaven, and that there all are servants of that Being. He now takes the very readiest course to maintain and magnify the spirit of good-will and charity, not only in himself, but in the bosoms of all who respond to his prayer.

It is a law of Christianity that we love one another. But in a family there are influences which tend to make us regardless of this duty. Children are exposed to a spirit of envy; they think, perhaps, that a brother or sister receives more of a parent's favor than themselves. And the father is prone to give occasion for this murmur, or the mother selects some one as her favorite, and leaves the others to suffer by her partiality. Now this partiality is a violation of the commands of Scripture. And it is not a trifling fault, — something of which we may say, "I know it is wrong, but still I cannot help it." No, this and every other form of self-love — or rather I would say, for such is its root, of selfishness — must be banished from our families. The only inquiry with a true follower of Christ will be,

"How can I amend and forsake this fault?" We answer, By united prayer. Parents, go with your offspring, children, go with each other, to the God of all hearts. Bow as one; confess your common transgressions, and ask for defence against your common temptations. Then may you hope for that "wisdom from above, which is full of good fruits, without envy, and without partiality."

Family devotion interrupts that tone of earthliness which so easily pervades those hearts which are never led statedly to meditate upon the spiritual world. Amid the pressure of business, we find not seldom that even our most lonely and sacred hours are disturbed by schemes of a worldly nature. It is right that while the day lasts we should work with our might. But it is not right that we commence these labors without seeking the guidance of God. It is not right that we close our eyes before giving thanks for our success to Him who has sent it. Yet, frail mortals, we are easily borne away from all heavenly aspirations! Almost insensibly, we pass through the day without having God in our thoughts.

So is the world forming a crust over our spirits. And if we do not begin to break through it now, the chance is — nay, the certainty will soon be — that of us it shall ere long be said, "Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots?" What, then, shall we do to check this polluting torrent? How are we effectually to break that iron band

which our daily occupation is binding around us? I answer, Among other means, introduce the accustomed, regular approach unto a spiritual Father. That family who truly and heartily unite in a prayer take to themselves weapons from the armory of God. They go not forth in their own strength; they each feel, as they turn from that holy service, that they are not alone, but the Father is with them. In the transactions of the day, amid the tumult of life, the thought ever and anon steals through their minds, I must buy as though I possessed not; I must use this world as not abusing it, for the fashion thereof passeth away. And, should some besetting sin threaten their virtue, and almost overwhelm their sternest resolution, a still, small voice comes on their ear, "How will you appear with that stain upon you at the hour of your family devotions?" And thus an arm is let down from above, and we are saved as by fire.

Domestic worship establishes among the members of a family a pure standard of conduct. By our habitual intercourse in society, we are extremely prone to derive our rules from abroad, and refer our actions to the world. We are hardly aware how exclusively we lean on the approbation of man. It would amaze us, were it not for the very familiarity of the practice, that beings who profess a belief in God, a sense of accountableness to him, and a conviction of their own immortality, should live so com-

pletely regardless of these great truths in their daily deportment. Creatures of yesterday, the bounds of whose habitation on earth are fixed, — secure not even of to-morrow's sun, — we still move and speak and appear like men sure of inhabiting these bodies for ever. Let us subscribe to what doctrine we may, our actions are continually saying, "My mountain shall stand ; I shall never go hence."

Now this course is mournfully wrong. It is faithlessness to our Master ; and if not speedily changed, it will bring disaster and woe upon ourselves. But how shall we break from the tyranny of human opinion, and of things seen and heard, and make God and his holy revelation our practical guide ? I believe that nothing will so strengthen us in this task as sincere domestic prayer.

The great trials of the Christian come upon him while abroad. He needs, therefore, a preparation for them at home. He must take the shield of faith from his own fireside. He must see that his principles are so firm that the gates of sin are not likely to prevail against them. In the business of the day his temper will be tried, — his passions often kindling almost to a flame. How can they be calmed and repressed ? There are times when the presence of man will not suffice ; the authority of God will be all which can do it. Let us go from the altar of prayer, our garments fragrant with the odor of its incense, and we can repel our tempters, — we shall

say unto every wicked one, "Get thee behind me, for thou savourest not the things which be of God, but the things which be of men."

Family worship impresses most favorably the younger members who are accustomed to hear it. True, they may, on the introduction of this service, manifest a restlessness or indifference. But let us not be disheartened by this. As they listen longer to these holy sounds, their ear, and thence their heart, will be won by it. If the father be a sincere worshipper of God, the children will observe it in his manner, his voice, his tone and countenance. The very atmosphere they breathe at these seasons will solemnize their feelings; and though they should be too young to comprehend his language, they will not be too young to feel it. There will be a sacredness in their view of the act; and their minds as well as their bodies will be fixed in a reverent posture.

At times the younger members of the family will hear a parental supplication for themselves. The simple petition, "Bless these our little ones," will arrest their attention and touch their spirits. Can they indeed hearken to one whom they so tenderly love, as he asks that wisdom, knowledge, piety, and all kind affections may descend upon them, without forming a resolution to gain these qualities? Will not the seriousness of that hour seem to them a message from above?

No one who has marked these sanctifying influen-

ces can doubt that family prayer is among the surest methods of a beneficent Providence for keeping children in the paths of virtue. And if by some baneful cause a son has strayed from a parent's care, and is wasting his time and substance in the ways of wickedness, let him but remember the daily prayer of home, and consider that, as he muses, it may be even now going up on his behalf, and it shall be to him a voice at which his flesh shall tremble, — a voice that will cry unto him, in piercing accents, "Son, why hast thou dealt thus with us?"

Let fathers reflect, also, how consistent this act would be with their other services for their offspring. We count him, in accordance with the Scriptures, "an infidel," who provides not food for his family. There is not one who would not be shocked at the conduct of him who, to the famishing child that begged of him bread, should offer a stone. What toils and privations and sufferings do parents cheerfully endure to bring home meat and raiment for their children! And shall they, as heads of these families, do nothing to give them spiritual food? Will they not so much as implore with them the blessing of God on their worldly labors? Do not those who neglect family prayer stand condemned of incongruous actions out of their own mouths? I beseech every father of a family to look at our subject in this light, and to say if he believes that the Holy Spirit is a less worthy gift than the things he so faithfully

provides for his children. O, let not one who esteems the souls of his offspring at their real value omit to render unto them this great benefit! Though it cost him, each day he lives, the severest effort to speak unto God in their behalf, let him not so wrong their immortal natures as to refuse to open his lips in prayer with and for them.

Think, again, of the importance of domestic devotion in the day of trouble. Your family are all now, it may be, spared to you, and sitting around you in the fulness of health. But will it be always so? Has it been always so? There was a time — it can hardly have been otherwise — when one of your circle, endeared to you by a thousand ties, was taken from her labors and brought low by disease. It was whispered — and you heard the fearful sounds — that the symptoms in her case were alarming. You imagined, in the anguish of the moment, that life to be quenched in death. O, how bitter, how withering, was the thought! Were you not impelled by something within to look above, — to implore the Almighty One in mercy to save that life? Could you meet your family in the morning, and read the silent anxiety that sat on their countenances, without ever wishing to join with them in asking the Preserver of men to stay that disease? And now, shall another and another be stricken with illness, and you forget those former aspirations? Will you not to-day heed the admonition you then felt, and set up a family altar?

And what if our Father in heaven should please, in his unsearchable wisdom, to remove from our family some one of these our kindred? We know not how soon we may be robbed of either or all of these treasures. There are those now sitting in solitary places, who were once surrounded by as many and as dear connections as ourselves. If that seat so long occupied at our table shall ere long be vacant, to whom shall we go for consolation? The waves of sorrow and death are rolling high and terribly around us! Who can tell that some one may not soon break on our devoted dwelling? And should it be so, are we ready to unite at our fireside in saying, "The will of the Lord be done"? Father, could you behold that tender child in the destroyer's hand, without desiring to pray, with the wife of your bosom, that you might bear the stroke with Christian submission? Could you pass through the night of that day which removed him to God, and feel no inclination to pour forth with those who survive a petition for heavenly support? O, no! the depths of your spirit would be so stirred and agitated, — your companion would so plead, by her tears, for a common utterance unto God, — your little children would look up to you with such entreating eyes, — that you would be driven to cry out with them and for them unto the living God.

Where, indeed, is the husband, the brother, the child, that is not prompted to flee to religion in the

hour of affliction? We feel then, what we perhaps never before felt, that it is faith in Christ, and a communion with his God and our God, which alone give peace amid the bereavements of earth. How often under these events has the Christian minister been called to lift up a voice of prayer in abodes where such sounds were altogether strange! How has he besought that Being, to whom all things are possible, that the angel of death might convert every dwelling it has entered into a house of prayer! And what consolation has he received in the funeral hour, when he could feel that the friends joined in his petitions, as they were wont to day by day, and that he laid not the fire of his devotion on a cold hearth! In such situations he could say, with unmingled satisfaction, "Our friend is not dead, but sleepeth." He is withdrawn, indeed, from our sight, but you and your pastor together feel that he is but raised to a wider mansion in that house you hope soon to reach.

This brings me to speak of another advantage in the act recommended. Where the head of a family offers up their daily prayers, religion is habitually felt to be a reality. It is not looked upon as some shadowy thing, an unaccustomed visitant, that is to enter their house only in sickness and affliction. It has in their minds, as it were, a form and body; it is an abiding presence. And it needs only to be thus seen and acknowledged, to exert its most renovating

effects. If we join in prayer, our sympathies are strengthened ; we acquire a deeper interest in each other's welfare and progress ; we are less selfish, and more easily led by every other religious service to a holy and benevolent life.

Nor does the good work terminate here. There grows up between us that regard which exists between fellow-travellers who are to take up their residence in some foreign land. We advise each other on the provision we should make for our eternal home. It is with us a settled and solemn conviction, that we are strangers and pilgrims here ; and therefore we look for our chief enjoyments with each other to that city whose builder and maker is God. When we say, " We hope to meet in heaven," there is in those few words a rich significance, a spiritual meaning, which the world hath not known.

But is it not affecting to witness a prayerless family ? The husband and wife, the mother and daughters, hope for a reunion when the day of bereavement is upon them. Yet in what are they to unite ? Have they any common attachment to invisible things ? Has any bond been formed between them and the Father ? And how will those harps accord in heaven which were not attuned on earth ? O, then, father, husband, head of that household, stand up before them in the name of the Lord ! Pray now, upon earth, at one and the same altar,

with these beloved inmates. Then will you go with them to that holy company where you will renew the song which the grave had but interrupted for a season.

CHAPTER XVII.

OBJECTIONS TO FAMILY PRAYER.

SUFFICIENT, I believe, has now been said, to convince one that in every Christian family there should be a daily offering of prayer and praise. But, after admitting the beneficial influences, and even the duty, of this service, many, it is feared, will plead some peculiar personal circumstances which they think justify their saying, "I pray thee have me excused."

It is my object in the present chapter to meet, and, as far as practicable, to obviate, these objections.

A reason with not a few for omitting this service is found in their impression, that it belongs only to professors of religion to pray in their families. While they remain without the pale of the Church, it does not occur to them that they have any share in this work. They acknowledge that they owe many duties to their children, — that they ought to provide for them, furnish them the means of religious instruction, educate them well, and walk before them in a

good and praiseworthy example. But to perform in their presence so solemn a service as prayer would be their duty only after they had publicly *professed* to be Christians.

But is it true that we are not bound to perform any religious duty until we declare to the world that we intend to do so? May not the same reasoning apply to all other objections of this kind? Yet no one would maintain that he was blameless in setting his children a wicked example, because he had never "professed" to give them a good one. Family worship is rendered unto God. It depends for its obligation upon God. He who is placed by that being at the head of a circle of immortal souls is accountable to him for all the influence he exerts on them. And whatever he has promised unto man, whether he has "owned a covenant" or not, subscribed to a formal creed or not, and commemorated the dying love of his Saviour or neglected that rite, can in no possible way affect this obligation.

"But," says another, "my life would not correspond to this act. People would say they could see no difference between my conduct and that of my neighbours, although there were prayers in my house." Who would say this? The men who themselves kept this commandment of the Lord? Never! Besides, ought you not to lead so exemplary a life that this inconsistency would not exist? Will it atone for an imperfect obedience to God, to

aver that we do not pray with our families? Are we excusable on this account in any moral offence? Should not a man tremble to confess that he is leading daily a life so enslaved to this world, so opposed to devotion, that the worship of God would not comport with it? Let all who, in the secret of their souls even, have harboured this apology, look seriously at it, and ask themselves whether, instead of thus shielding their neglect, they ought not to commence the good work at once; and instead of conforming in this respect to their lives, whether they ought not to begin a family service, and live as they pray. Who can tell but this very habit would lead them to a watchful and obedient life, and thus prove to *them*, of all men, most beneficial?

But perhaps this is not your objection. The great obstacle in your way is the mixed character of your family. You can think of one, or a few, perhaps, who would unite with you cordially in this service. But there are others to whom you believe it would bring an unwelcome, wearisome hour. This class, I believe, is usually small; where prayer is offered with simplicity and sincerity, it has an intrinsic power to excite an interest. If it be a dull exercise in itself, or in the manner of its performance, of course it must be wearisome to the listener. But this need never be of necessity.

To some in your family you fear — and this fear is a very prevalent hindrance to domestic worship —

it would be an occasion for a smile or a jeer. But has it come to this? Are there those who sit daily at your board, so thoughtless and irreverent that they would make light of a service offered in their presence to the God of heaven? How long shall it be so? With the feelings and principles suitable to your station, — placed, as you are, at the head of a family, — how long can you consent to leave these persons ready to mock at the most sacred things? Have you no duty to perform to them? Can you do nothing to stay that spiritual pestilence that is wasting within them? Will you not make the attempt? If you realize the account you must render on high, you will, both by prayer and by friendly advice, do something to awaken in them a better spirit. If you cannot inspire them with any personal seriousness, you may at least lead them to pay a decent regard to religion itself and to religious exercises.

"But," says some one, "my situation is peculiar. There are those in my household whose opinions on the subject of religion differ from my own. I fear they would not join with me in prayer." What are the grounds of this fear? Have they actually refused to unite with you? Do they, think you, not pray in secret? Why should they decline to do so at the fireside? Might not this very service do something to conciliate their Christian affection for you? May they not have urged your neglect of family wor-

ship as a proof of the error of your doctrine? If you believe in the value and efficacy of prayer, are you not solemnly called upon to testify this belief, — to convince these individuals that you serve your God as truly and as devoutly as any Christian upon earth, and that, though you dislike a display of one's faith, and would never obtrude your own, yet you are not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ? We cannot easily estimate, I believe, the respect it would gain for our views of religion, the advancement it would furnish to the cause of Christianity, — to pass over its benign and sanctifying effects on ourselves, — should the head of each family set up an altar unto the common Father of all sects and all Christians.

Are we told by others, that their business prevents an attendance to this duty, — that they cannot find time for it? This, we suspect, is an apology that prevails among very many, and gives them satisfaction. They regard their work as essential. If a man "who provides not for his household be worse than an infidel," they imagine that he who does provide for them must be a Christian, — that he can serve his Maker in no more acceptable way than by earning bread for his children.

But I would ask such an one, Does the labor of your hands accomplish all this work? Is the glory of sending the showers on your lands, of causing the sun to invigorate your plants, of supplying you

strength to toil, or of crowning your business with success, — is all this your own? Why, then, will you not confess who *is* the Giver? And when you have begun here, why will you not go on, and rehearse all his blessings in supporting the life and continuing to you the friendships of your nearest connections, in the forgiveness of your common and mutual offences, and entreat him to impart to you spiritual gifts, and seek an obedient and submissive heart at his hand?

Do you still say, "I have no time for prayer; it is well for those who have leisure to discharge this duty"? No time for prayer! Have you no time for pleasure? Is no hour in the day wasted in idle conversation? If some gainful scheme was proposed, could you not find a few minutes, morning and evening, to attend to it? Could you not, if your life, or even your honor and comfort alone, were concerned, take a small portion of time from the season of sleep? O, then, be as liberal unto God as you are to yourself. Offer him, at least, this small return for his loading you daily with benefits. And when you plead this excuse, ask, Must I find no time for sickness and for death? Should I in my last moments lament the losses I have suffered, in respect to time, from prayer? Should I not mourn and weep at this poor excuse, — "no time for prayer"? Let us live as we shall wish we had lived when we are called to go hence.

But when all these obstacles are about to be overcome, a greater still is seen often to arise. It is the plea of inability to perform the service. There are numbers of pious and exemplary Christians, who, though persuaded of the efficacy of this service, continue, for this reason, to omit it. It may be, they feel their education to be deficient. They have children more learned than themselves, before whom they feel incompetent to address their Creator. Should they make the attempt, a failure in propriety or readiness of expression might ensue. Their safety, they believe, is in silence. To such we would say, their fears are doubtless unfounded. Let the heart be warm with the spirit of prayer, and the form and the mere words are seldom found wanting. Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. If a man have aught to communicate, language will usually come at his bidding. Let him be in earnest, let the subject interest and take deep hold of him, and how rarely does he labor for expressions. So is it in the act of devotion. The feeling is far more closely connected with the utterance than we commonly imagine.

As regards fitness of language, the more plain and simple this is, the more acceptable to God. And when the hearer perceives you to be hearty and sincere in the act, you disarm him of a critical spirit. If children be made aware of the objects of this service, they will be too humble, too sensible of their

faults and of their spiritual wants, to indulge at that hour the unworthy disposition of fault-finding. If they do not possess the right views of prayer, and the feelings suitable for its performance, we should strive to enlighten them, and, with the Divine aid, to impress their minds and hearts with a sense of religion. But do not, in any event, allow their criminality to remain, and yourself to be forced to keep silence before God, through fear of their criticisms.

Should there be those so painfully conscious of their inabilities as to shrink from the duty recommended, I would suggest to them the use of some form of prayer. When Jesus was on earth, he prescribed for his disciples a form, — that inimitable model of devotion termed the Lord's Prayer. Why may not we, if circumstances demand it, read this and similar forms in presence of our families? The sentiments it contains might surely be listened to and felt. For prayer depends for its acceptance, not on the mode, but on the state of the affections in which it is offered.

In all ages of the Church, written aids to devotion have been employed; and let us not consider them without value. Let the head of a household commence, if he choose, with a form. A growth in holy emotions, and the facility given by exercise, will soon lead him to dispense with it. Better, indeed, read, if it were but a portion of Scripture, morning and evening, in presence of his family, than neglect

all the appearances of a house occupied by immortal beings.

I have spoken of domestic worship as an unquestionable duty. It may be objected, that it is nowhere expressly commanded in Scripture. I reply, that we have abundant examples of it, if there be no special command for it, in the Bible. The worship of families is a practice as old as our race. Look at the patriarchs and saints of old, — Abraham, David, Joshua, Job ; among the pious services of these men, this was never forgotten. A blessing was pronounced on parents and children who joined in their acts of faith and intercession. A withering denunciation was uttered against the families that "called not on the name of the Lord." All nations, Jew and Gentile, nay, Mahometan and Pagan, have scrupulously discharged this duty. Our honored forefathers — every household — were men of prayer. Shall we put an end to this blessed custom ? Shall the torch of fireside devotion expire in our hands ? Are we willing to have our dwellings stand, like the houses of the Egyptians, with no mark of the Lord's impression upon them ?

Christianity, it cannot be too often repeated, is a social religion. It calls us, not only to promote our own virtue and happiness, but also that of others. And if it be true of charity, it is equally so of piety, that it begins at home. Each member of a family owes something, in this light, to all who compose it.

And the father, holding the station of most influence, is under the highest obligations. Can he, then, say, when a question comes up involving the present and the eternal well-being of his household, "I may please myself. I may discharge or neglect this duty"? Shall he take shelter in the thought that he is not a professor of religion? Shall he stop to inquire whether this or that individual believes as he does, or would approve of the step? Can he find it in his heart to say, "I do not live like a Christian, and therefore I am excused from prayer"? Or, when the moral and spiritual good of his children and other inmates are at stake, when their improvement or degradation are concerned in the issue, will that man — dare he — begin to say, "I have no time for this duty; my business presses; it is not convenient"? No; as he reflects on the case, he will rather take this ground: — "Jesus, my master, commands me, on the pain of exclusion from the favor of God, to confess him before men. I will not, then, permit the fear of man, a treacherous pride, or a Peter-like shame, to seal my lips and prevent my petitions with and for my household. I will endeavour, as in other respects, so in this, to show myself his consistent disciple."

Let us this day set the mark before ourselves, that, if not now, yet some time, and that soon, our voices shall be heard lifted unto our God and Father in behalf of our bosom companion and our beloved children.

Let not the time be distant when the word of God, and some mode of prayer, shall find utterance from our mouths, — when, let the trial be severe as it may, we will take up the cross and follow our Lord.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE BIBLE. — SINGING.

ALTHOUGH something was said in a previous chapter on the use of the Bible in a system of religious education, yet the topic is too important to be dismissed without further remarks. This volume lies at the foundation of all sound culture, whether mental or moral. The student should make it his daily companion; men in every profession and every occupation should be familiar with its pages, and possessed of its truths and its spirit. There is a growing disposition, it is feared, to neglect the perusal of the Scriptures. In some instances the volume is not owned by the individual, and in others — who can tell how many — conscience is satisfied with the mere possession of it. It lies year after year on the table, emphatically a "neglected Bible."

But no faithful parent will yield to this custom. We are admonished by it rather to make special efforts to restore the Bible to that elevated place, where, in all ages, it belongs. A child should be

taught, from his earliest years, that this is "*the* Book," as its name imports, — the best of all books. It should be always at hand, treated with reverence, appealed to in conversation, and made the standard in the family for all opinions, principles, feelings, and actions. The experiment has never been tried of training a generation lost to all due respect for the Scriptures. Let not the parents now on the stage incur the tremendous risk of trying that experiment.

It is well to establish the practice of each person reading a verse or two of the Bible in turn at the time of family worship. Our business habits, the arrangements of school hours, and our other pursuits, often interfere sadly with this desirable custom. But if it be neglected some days, or even every day in the week, on the Sabbath it should be sacredly regarded. I know of no more interesting spectacle than that of a family group gathered round the table on the evening of that day to read aloud some portion of Scripture. The father and mother, the oldest and the youngest of the brothers and sisters, there they sit, side by side, engaged in a service that places an "incorruptible crown" on all the previous exercises of the day. They recognize their common dependence on that Being, the record of whose word they are now perusing. Link by link they are passing round one another that golden chain which is to bind them together in toil, trials, troubles, blessings, and joys on earth, and in the immortal hope of find-

ing their names written together at last "in the Lamb's book of life."

In the education of his children, the parent will find an ever-ready aid in the Bible. It will furnish him with all the variety of characters and scenes, of instructions and commands, of invitations, promises, encouragements, and sanctions, which he needs. There, too, he will find plans and methods of religious culture of the highest practical value. "The letter" is there, important to be lodged in the child's mind, and without which he cannot gain "the spirit" which "giveth life."

It is important that we consider well the nature of a child's mind, if we would interest and instruct him aright in the Bible. As far as it is reasonable, we should allow our children to select for themselves the portions of Scripture they are to read; for it always gives a relish to our pursuits to have them voluntary. We may find them choosing generally the narratives alone. But these narratives, such as the stories of Joseph, of Samuel, of Daniel, and others, are, for the most part, of a moral and religious character. And were they not so, it is a great point to interest a child, in some way, in the reading of the Bible. For then you may hope that in after life he will pass from its stories to its abstract doctrines and precepts.

The writer recollects with pain an opposite course pursued with himself in childhood. He was hired

to read the Bible through in course. This reduced it all literally to a *dead* level in his estimation, — the whole being regarded as a task-book. He was also required to read the obscure parts at the fireside ; and, as if this would not effect the end so unfortunately set before him, he was compelled to read the Bible in course at school ; and at the end of the term came a public exhibition in the meeting-house, where the scholars were to recite, for prizes of books, as many chapters as possible from memory. Bitter are his reminiscences of repeating page after page of Paul's Epistles to the Romans and Ephesians, in which the words " election," " foreknowledge," " predestination," and their kindred expressions, rose cloud upon cloud over his view of the sacred volume, and made it his aversion, instead of being, as it should have been made, his delight.

There are many methods by which the Scriptures may be clothed with interest to a child. We may procure for him well-executed prints of their scenes and characters ; and we may give him a good map of Palestine, and assist him to draw one for himself. It is desirable to place in his hands biographies, tales, and sketches, written in a close connection with Scripture characters and events. And even the smallest child may acquire a pleasant, as well as a true, idea of many passages in the Bible through his toys. I have seen a little toy called Noah's ark. Suppose, now, after the story of Noah, you ask your

child to take a little ark of this kind, place the animals in order, with the patriarch and his family at their head. You may launch the ark in water, and you will find a multitude of questions put to you, in answering which you can convey much valuable instruction.

By every method in our power let us create an interest early in the Bible, and keep it alive at every succeeding stage, until our children are of an age to read and understand and apply to practice the sacred volume for themselves. Let the Sermon on the Mount, and other similar portions of it, be treasured in the memory ; they will be a support amid temptation, and a solace in trouble, to the latest hour of their lives. Explain to them especially the New Testament. Offer them up in baptism ; give the lambs unto Jesus, and unfold afterward to them the significance of this beautiful rite. Lead them to dedicate themselves, in their youth, to Father, Son, and Spirit. With characters so established, they will be disposed early to avow themselves disciples of Jesus, and come voluntarily and joyously to the table of his love.

In connection with the reading of the Bible, I would recommend the introduction of vocal music. Let a hymn be sung as a part of the family worship, and let the smaller children join in this act. It is now believed that nearly every child has the capacity for singing. For many reasons, this gift should be

early exercised, and never afterward neglected. Sacred music promotes devotional feeling hardly less than direct acts of prayer. And if the listener is thus benefited, how much more must the performer be himself, when he sings with the spirit as well as the understanding!

Music is a means of individual happiness; it has been well called "the universal language of the feelings." We often find ourselves in joyous moments expressing our feelings in its tones. How many weary hours may it beguile, how many pangs may it soothe! I recently heard of an eminent Christian, who, amid the tedious hours of her last sickness, would often ask her companion, at midnight, when she found him awake, to join with her in singing some favorite stanza. So is it that, in health and joy, amid pain and trouble, under all the vicissitudes of this eventful life, we have occasion to give thanks for music. The intelligent parent, who truly loves his child, will therefore do all he can to provide for him this inappreciable blessing.

Vocal music is of great value in the culture of the intellect. How many precious truths are impressed on a child's mind, by being conveyed to it through the aid of songs! These lessons are prized, from being often associated with pleasant scenes, dear friends, and happy hours. They are fixed in the memory as no mere language in prose could have fastened them. Secular as well as sacred instructions

are not seldom best imparted by the help of vocal music. "Let me make the ballads of a people," said some one, "and I care not who makes their laws." The history of many barbarous nations has been transmitted on the wings of poetry and music combined; and in not a few civilized countries, songs have been employed to disseminate ideas and awaken feelings among those to whom books were little known. Let the parent, who would imprint knowledge of any kind deeply on his child's mind, seek to find for it, as often as possible, some embodiment in verse and voice.

It is matter for rejoicing, that, as in foreign lands, so in our own, songs are being introduced into our schools, which in some instances impart useful knowledge, as well as awaken pure feelings. Much more might be done than now is to make this a delightful vehicle of wisdom and truth among our children. It is lamentable that we have so few songs in this land worthy of an intelligent and virtuous community. Instead of filling the young mind with "Negro Melodies," why can we not have popular airs accompanied by words worthy of this noble art? Have we no parents or teachers skilled in music, who can furnish songs for our children in which the sentiment shall be elevated, as well as the melody grateful to the ear?

Meantime, let us preoccupy the youthful mind with good songs and hymns, chants and anthems, so that,

from a refined taste, they will reject what is low and frivolous. I do not object to humorous words as an occasional recreation in connection with music; let us still have those amusing airs. But let them not be the staple of our popular music. Our children should not be imbued, as they now too often are, with insipid songs, and language which is sometimes worse than foolish, doing positive harm to the mind and morals.

Vocal music is a great aid to parental discipline. It softens the spirit, and renders it plastic and obedient; it quells those passions which sometimes render family government so difficult; it allays peevishness and fretfulness, and every jarring disposition. The parent finds himself at times excited and disturbed by his business, or by collision with others, and he can in no way so well calm his spirit, and inspire a mild authority in his own breast, as by asking that some gentle air, or a stanza of some hymn, be sung. When the voices are once attuned, the inward discord will ere long cease; and the hearts of all, parents and children, will be soon melted into harmony.

One of the most serious difficulties in domestic government arises from the disputes among children. The little world is sometimes set on fire by contending tongues. Words are perhaps insufficient to allay the excitement. But let there be music; call the contending spirits to pause and join in a song, and

you need not fear a renewal of their altercations. Those few tones will do more than your frown, your command, or even the rod, can ever do to restore and preserve a spirit-harmony corresponding to the harmony of their voices.

Let your children be accustomed to sing together, and it will diminish the desire, so common in early life, for a perpetual round of amusements beyond the fireside. The reunion of the family at nightfall suggests the pleasant recreation of domestic singing. Where the eldest daughter or son is skilled in music, many a happy hour may be passed in their training the younger to the same high accomplishment. So occupied, they will not thirst for scenes and circles which tend to mental dissipation. Still less will those educated to this pure taste desire to roam abroad and partake in amusements whose associations and influences tend to debasement and vice.

For its moral advantages, no less than as an innocent recreation, the parent should encourage in his family the culture both of vocal and instrumental music. The desire of improvement in this art affords occupation for hours that would otherwise hang heavily on the hands. Children are incited by it to benefit each other ; and a love thus grows up between sisters who have sat side by side at the piano-forte, which no change of times and no length of years will impair.

If your daughter prove a proficient in music, she

has a noble opportunity of contributing to the happiness of others. Let her be trained to perform cheerfully whenever a call is made upon her. It may inspire her with that confidence in her own powers so needful to success in life. When the request is made, it is better for her disposition that she comply with it readily than determinately refuse; and I believe that even an inferior performance is less distasteful to a party of friends than an obstinate reluctance to contribute to their entertainment. Every gift we possess, even though it be but "the one talent," comes from our Heavenly Father, and should be used wherever it will promote the innocent gratification of a fellow-spirit.

And not only in the family and the social circle, but in still wider spheres, our children may contribute to the entertainment and the improvement of others by the culture and exercise of their powers for music. They can assist in the singing of their Sunday school. It is to be regretted that so many of our scholars, not a few of whom join in the songs of their week-day school, and hence show their capacity to do it here, decline singing in the Sunday school. This practice may be traced in part to the fact, that parents are remiss in their duty. Did they enjoin this exercise on their children, and prepare them for it by encouraging music at home, we should not miss so many voices in the sacred songs of the Sabbath school.

The practice, also, of congregational singing, is now gaining favor. It needs only a fit training of our children to enable the whole people to join in this part of the services. Could it be done well, who would not rejoice to see it everywhere introduced? And what is required for its perfection but the universal culture of sacred music at our firesides?

Let this be done, and we shall at least supersede in most of our churches the necessity of hiring others to sing for us. It is difficult to secure the true effect of church music, that is, a devotional spirit, where the performers come to the service merely because they are paid for it. There may be irreverence among a voluntary choir, but no one will contend that this is so likely to be witnessed in their case as in that of a choir who feel no interest in the music except as an art and as a means of pecuniary gain. If, then, we would have our church singing *sacred*, and not profane music, why do we not train up performers taken from the bosom of the congregation? The parent can render no more generous service to the religious society with whom he worships, than to prepare his own children to contribute personally to the songs of the sanctuary.

I may add, that the practice of singing is now regarded as most friendly to health. The use of the voice is proved to be a valuable physical exercise. It invigorates the lungs, expands the chest, promotes

the circulation of the blood, and is favorable to digestion. Let our daughters engage frequently in singing, and we shall do much to remove that growing paleness of the cheek and contraction of the chest which augur so sadly in these days for the physical energies of the coming generation. Indeed, health, happiness, virtue, and piety unite in calling parents, guardians, and teachers to give renewed attention to the culture of music, both as a science and an art.

CHAPTER XIX.

REASONABLE EXPECTATIONS.

It may appear singular, perhaps paradoxical, to say, that by expecting little we can gain much, in any work whatever to which we may apply our hands. Still, is it not often true? Do we not see cases every day in which men are mortified, humbled, and enfeebled by the disappointment of their extravagant expectations? An individual forms a false conception of his own abilities, and seeks and expects to reach a position for which he is not qualified, and in this attempt loses a situation for ever to which his powers were adapted. We see a thousand illustrations of this melancholy character.

Not a few parents fail in the education of their children, from expecting too much of them. Did they estimate their capacities aright, and regard them according to their age, that is, as boys and girls, and not as men and women, they would be saved from a multitude of errors in their method of training them.

The mother imagines her child is a prodigy; her

son can recite poetry to perfection ; her daughter can read or sing better than any other girl of her acquaintance. Hence, on every occasion, she puts these children forward. They do not excite the admiration she anticipated, and so she is made miserable. Or if they do, then they are spoiled by flattery. The raptures which their exhibition calls forth deceive the mother, and render her ridiculous ; and they stimulate, at the same time, the children's vanity, and thus do them unspeakable harm.

Here is a mother who expects of her boys the sobriety of manhood. She complains that they will not keep quiet themselves, nor allow other people to be so. She is perpetually calling to them to sit still, and looks that they shall fold their arms and do absolutely nothing. But how unreasonable is this ! God has filled them with life ; they have a bounding pulse and a buoyant spirit, and why should they be thus despotically repressed ? Without this restless and energetic disposition, there would be little hope of their accomplishing much in life. If we look into the future, we shall see that the darkest of all prospects lies before that boy who is quiet enough to sit in a chair hour after hour, doing nothing but keep still. Any thing is better than this perfect quietism ; better have your ears stunned, and your furniture all marred, than the opposite extreme of a mere passive immobility.

Without the restlessness of childhood, we should

never have the force and enterprise needed or the successful man. It is this very quality which gives us, in after life, the active merchant, the skilful mechanic, and the progressive agriculturist. Without it, the world had never been blest by its long line of illustrious men, artists, philosophers, statesmen, discoverers, and inventors. To it we owe the achievements of science, the power of the pulpit, the administration of justice, the practice and progress of the healing art, and the advancement of education. Repress it in the boy, make him satisfied with sitting perfectly still, and in that way being good, and you may be sure he will be left behind by his companions in every career of interest, usefulness, and honor.

"But would you give up our houses to misrule and disorder? Are we to have nothing in them but noise and violence, lest we repress the energies of our children?" No, this need not be; I would find employment for these energies. The boy studies at school; he should have exercise at home. Do not, then, confine him in a chair, and compel him to be idle, nor yet to read and study alone. There are continual calls for domestic occupation, in running of errands, in waiting upon parents, and in brothers and sisters assisting each other. Why should not your son be trained to do all he can for his sisters or his younger brothers? How many little things are constantly calling for effort and self-

sacrifice in a family! Parents should study to find something to occupy every child in their circle. Let there be a resolution to do this, and the ways and means will readily present themselves. I do not deny that it may, in some cases, be a salutary punishment, or a good discipline, for a child to sit still. But, as a general habit, we should not expect to keep children quiet by our naked command. We can only do it by providing substitutes for their noisy pursuits.

We err, also, in expecting of children the gravity of men and women. They are eager for play, and full of vivacity; we wonder, perhaps, why they are never satisfied with their sports. "What pleasure," we ask, "can they find in this constant round of trifling pursuits? Why do they not love study and love work better than these foolish amusements?" But were we not children once ourselves? And did *we* then love work better than play? Was it easy for us to be sober and staid, and never say a childish thing, and never do an unwise one? We forget the past, by demanding so much of our children; and we show little knowledge of human nature. They are such as the Creator made them, — not to be old at once, nor middle-aged, sedate, and wise now. They are for the present to be children, elastic in their spirits, lovers of sport, their tastes far different from ours, yet none the less fitting to their age than ours are to manhood, —

"By Nature's kindly law,
Pleased with a rattle, tickled with a straw."

Let us not boast ourselves of superiority to them; for to higher orders of being it doubtless appears that

"Some livelier plaything gives our youth delight,
A little louder, but as empty quite."

And at last it is seen that

"Scarfs, garters, gold, amuse our riper age."

The parent sometimes perceives in his child a love of power, a fondness for authority, a disposition to be master in everything. He would fain, it may be, extinguish this disposition; or he expects that by a few words he can lead him to exercise it only over the right persons and on the proper occasions. But are these reasonable expectations? The love of power may terminate, it is true, in a domineering and tyrannical temper. But this is not necessary, and we should not, therefore, desire to destroy it in a child. It is better than a spirit which is facile to a fault; for it is seldom that those very easily persuaded are persuaded to much good. We need, in this world of error and sin, an intellectual and moral firmness, the seeds of which should be implanted in childhood. If, then, a daughter has the love of power, do not try to destroy it, but so direct it that she shall aid, instead of lording it over, her younger sisters. Your boy, perhaps, is fond of power; encourage him to exercise it aright. Let him take the

part of the weak, and lead his companions, but always in the right direction. Show him how noble it is to protect a sister, to part boys who would quarrel, to exercise justice and benevolence in connection with authority. You may hope then that what seems to you a dangerous quality will prove of the utmost advantage. It will inspire him to protect the weak everywhere, and at all periods of his life, against the oppression of the strong.

Some parents expect their children to appear well in company, while they allow them to conduct themselves as they please when alone with them. But is this rational? We know that the very best children are excited by company, and often do and say things before strangers which mortify their parents. What, then, should be expected of those ordinarily subject to no family discipline? Suppose your little girl is permitted to cry for candy or cake, and never denied them, — to throw the chairs about the room, or to soil your dress, as she pleases: will she never tease for her indulgences in company, or romp about the room and do mischief before others? The presence of a stranger may restrain some children, who are usually unrestrained; but such cases are rare. To look for quiet manners and a respectful deportment under such circumstances is to expect wheat where we have sown tares.

There is no more bitter cup to a parent than ingratitude.

" How sharper than a serpent's tooth it is
To have a thankless child ! "

But few pursue the best course to awaken and secure gratitude. The mother thinks to make her daughter grateful by unlimited indulgence, by allowing her to be idle, and doing everything for her. To her surprise, she finds her daughter more and more ungrateful. And why should she not be ? Indulgence does not render the child happy ; it makes her peevish and miserable ; and why should she thank her mother for these fruits of her training ?

Still further, we see, the world over, that gratitude is not rendered in proportion to the favors bestowed, but according to the benefits we are conscious of receiving. If your child, then, does not value what you do for him, he will never be grateful for it. But unless you teach him from the cradle to express his thanks, he will not feel disposed to do it. If you always wait upon your son, he will not know the labor of doing it, and how can he be grateful for your service ? What is common we do not appreciate ; what is rare impresses us. Educate a child to wait upon himself, ordinarily, and then whenever you assist him he will prize your assistance, and thank you for it.

There are self-denying mothers who never call the attention of their children to what they do for them. They imagine it would be selfish to speak of their own efforts. But who will remind these children of

their filial obligations, if their parents do not? It seems to me a false view of duty to pursue this course. For the good of the child, and not for your own sake, not as an act of self-praise, you are bound to set distinctly before him his obligations to his parents. Point your children to the suffering orphan; let the father describe the privations and toils of the mother; and do not let her hesitate to speak to the older of her sacrifices for the younger. It should not be done in a tone of complaint, but mentioned calmly, as a fact. To neglect doing it is to leave a child utterly insensible of the value of his home, and of course never grateful to those who made it what it is.

I would suggest to a child, on every suitable occasion, the propriety of expressing his thanks. Let him not receive all favors as a matter of course; but let each, as far as possible, be traced to the giver. If we do not in this way steadily cultivate his gratitude, if we do not plant the tree and water and enrich it, let us not look for the fruits. If we do cherish it, then, as our children grow up, they will lay up in their hearts the sweet memory of benefits received, and in after years they will welcome opportunities to repay their early debt. They will be filled with gratitude to all who do them good; they will thus drink of a fountain of unfailing happiness, — a fountain sealed up to the ungrateful spirit.

Yet more, when we render our children grateful

to man, we sow in their hearts the seeds of a perpetual thankfulness to the Giver of all good. We embellish for them the whole outward universe. For what appears so beautiful as a world blessed with the gifts of a divine love? Let our children be grateful, and they will see the Father's bounty in every opening blossom, and hear his inspiring voice in the murmuring stream, the song of the bird, and the hum of the bee. Our fondest anticipations in relation to their purity of heart and devoutness of temper can then hardly be disappointed.

It will temper our judgment of a child to remember that there is one great teacher under which he has not yet been placed, and that is *experience*. We ought not to look for those qualities in the boy which can come only from the discipline of the man. Perhaps he is passionate; do all you can to control his temper now. But consider that his passion proceeds in part from the warmth inseparable from his age. Advancing years will naturally tend to allay this heat. Yet more, he will see the necessity of self-control, and learn, perhaps, by stern experience, what you cannot now teach him.

We must do our duty, and wait and trust to the future for results. The great point is to make a child's experience tell as early as possible on his character. Show him what he is gaining every day where he makes efforts for improvement. Put your finger on the very spot where his wrong-doing brings

suffering upon him. Unfold to him the peace of conscience ; point him to instances in his own life in which truthfulness, kindness, and gentleness have rendered him happy and made him useful to others. A moral education conducted on this principle cannot fail of success. In some things we may err, in this we cannot be mistaken. Be patient, and your patience will work with your child's experience ; and that experience will be the basis of a well-grounded hope.

We desire, and probably expect, our children to be sympathetic, charitable to the poor, and piteous to the sufferer in body or mind. Will this spirit be the legitimate consequence of our mode of training them ? If we allow them to treat the beggar with harshness and cruelty, or with utter indifference, let us not complain that they grow selfish and hard-hearted. Better encourage them to notice the needy, to bring them into your house and give them food, or at least to speak always a kind word to them. Let them visit the dwellings of the destitute, the intemperate, and the thriftless. They will see things there which cannot but awaken their compassion, and inspire them to help these unfortunate beings.

It is not uncommon for children to ridicule the deformed, and make sport of the aged, especially if they have peculiarities in their language or manners. There are parents who do nothing to repress this pernicious habit ; some even encourage it, by join-

ing in the laugh and the jeer. But can they be aware of the results of this course? There is nothing which tends more effectually to quench every noble and generous feeling in the breast, than derision of the unfortunate. It is wrong to ridicule those errors and infirmities which men bring on themselves. But to laugh at the deformed, to mock those whom God has visited with bodily afflictions, is a sin of the deepest dye. If there are any beings on earth whom we should pity, and for whom and over whom we should weep, they are those infirm in mind or misshapen in body. To add to their calamity by scoffs and sneers is conduct worthy only of a realm lower than ours. Let the parent beware how he fosters this unhallowed disposition; let him cherish in his children the utmost tenderness toward those in any manner suffering and afflicted.

What I have said of the habit of deriding the unfortunate applies to ridicule in general. As we wish our children to be gentle, kind, and forgiving, we must beware of treating them with sarcasm. Some parents say things which cut a child to the heart, and then wonder at the evil spirit he manifests. How can it be that the boy who is mimicked and laughed at for some bad habit should be made better by it? If he have a tone or a trick you would amend, do not treat him with cruel satire, but, if it be necessary to imitate him, that he may see his fault, let it be done calmly and kindly. A child feels injured

by a bitter ridicule ; it only kindles in him resentment and anger. Whenever you advert to his faults, let love be in your heart ; for so only can you hope to lead him even to attempt the reformation of his errors.

We would fain see in our family a spirit of peace ; we desire not only that blows should be avoided, but harsh words, and every display of passion. How is this great end to be accomplished ? If we expect it will come from a reign of violence and terror on our part, we shall be sadly disappointed. A peaceful temper is never promoted by strong stimulants. The less stimulus of a harsh nature we daily employ, the more true peace may we expect. " The maxim," to use the words of another, " applies as well to the mind as to the body, that the least quantity of stimulus that will preserve it in healthy action is the best." For this reason, the less of physical force or menacing language we use, — the less, to take an expressive word, we *scold* our children, — the more order and quiet we shall commonly secure. I have seen a family where a single word, or a look even, would allay a rising storm. The gentle but firm method is the best security for domestic peace.

Who has not seen families in which violent and direct efforts to root out evil, with no attempt to introduce good, have failed of their end ? The system was to " break the natural will, cross natural inclination, and subdue pride by constant mortification."

The result was, that the children grew up just as self-willed, and proud, and contentious, as they were in their early years. It is only a feigned submission, and a pretended peacefulness, that we can achieve by harsh measures. What we should aim at and labor for is, not to take away the food, but to destroy the appetite for it. It is not enough to punish every instance of contention severely; we must persevere until the quarrelsome spirit is extinguished; and mildness, not force, will lead to this permanent good.

There is a stratagem employed in military tactics, by which the attention of the enemy is diverted, and thus opportunity is afforded for an attack in an unexpected quarter. I have thought we might derive a hint from this fact in the education of our children. We are apt, when they do wrong, to approach them in direct conflict. Were it not wiser, especially with those very young, to employ some diversion? A little child utters a fretful expression; do not fret at him, but utter a few soothing words, take him in your arms, give him something to please him. You may thus check in the bud an irritable disposition, and destroy the germs of anger, disobedience, and violence.

A sudden and severe punishment, on the other hand, usually excites, instead of subduing, the temper. If you strike a child hastily, before you are sure he is to blame, you may do him immeasurable

injury. Suppose you have commanded him to do something. Perhaps he does not know whether you are really in earnest ; very small children often mistake on this point. He looks in your face to judge of your intentions ; if you mean as you say, and he perceives it, you should exact obedience. Yet let it be done calmly, with gentleness joined to decision ; he will then yield to your authority, and at the same time learn from you an invaluable lesson of self-government. By patient consideration, and by a deliberate manner of discipline, our expectations will be moderated, and the immediate effects of our efforts will be as great as we can reasonably anticipate.

CHAPTER XX.

INCIDENTAL EDUCATION.

THERE is no agency in which man is concerned so secret, so subtile and mysterious in its influence, as that of moral and religious education. I know it is not commonly so thought; we imagine that there is hardly anything we understand so well as the means and effects of education. Some do not like to hear a sermon or a lecture upon this topic; they say, "It is dull and trite; we know everything that can be said about it already. The way to train up a child is as plain as the noonday. Employ a certain well-known series of appliances, teachers, books, &c., and you are sure of success."

But is it indeed so? Why, then, do we have characters so diametrically opposite to one another, where the education has been always the same? Why do scholars differ so entirely in their progress in the same school, and under the same teacher? Nay, why do children born and bred under one roof, and by the same two parents, prove at last as unlike

as light and darkness ? If we all understand education so completely, why are so many great questions in regard to it still mooted ? If you say we know all that can be known concerning it, how will you account for the controversies still going on in regard to the comparative value of an education at home and abroad, in regard to the time of commencing, the methods of carrying forward, and even the results to be aimed at in a good education ? If we have fathomed the depths of this matter, why are the world still divided on that most important point, namely, What can education, under the best circumstances, accomplish ? It is not yet settled how much is due to nature, to original capacities, and how much instruction can supply. We cannot, indeed, but confess our profound ignorance of the heights and the depths of this great mystery. We know not everything, but comparatively nothing, of the processes, the means, the powers and influences, that go to make up a perfect education, whether intellectual, moral, or religious.

The means of culture in general may be divided into two classes, the direct and the indirect. What do we know of each of these ?

With the first, it is true, we have a somewhat extended acquaintance. Direct and designed education includes teachers, books, systems, rules, and all the aids and appliances that constitute a school. We know, in the main, what a good teacher is ;

he is one who can advance his pupils in knowledge, and train them to mental discipline. We understand, it may be, the difference between manuals of education, the good and the bad. We comprehend the influence of systems, rules, habits of study, methods of teaching and of government.

In the case of moral and religious education, we know what lessons can be taught at the fireside, how hymns may be learned, and catechisms recited, and the Bible read or repeated, chapter by chapter. The Sunday school is to us no mystery ; we can tell what constitutes a good Sunday school, how one is to become a faithful teacher, and what interest a child should take in the school. Perhaps we see and know our own duty as parents in relation to the school-room, and are gaining new light, from year to year, by performing that duty. The parent sends his children punctually to school. The teacher is always in his or her place, and consequently the children are delighted to go, and the class are doing well. And yet, important as are all these outward instruments and helps, I venture to affirm, that, taken alone, unsupported by another set of agencies and influences, they are almost powerless in deciding the final character and the ultimate destiny of our children. If so, they constitute, in reality, but a subordinate part of education.

Why do we say this ? Because the indirect and usually unobserved instrumentalities of Providence

do more to make us what we are than either teachers, books, lectures, or any or all other merely external, direct, and obvious means of education. This is a strong statement, but is it not true ?

No one can have failed to observe the effect of incidental circumstances on the character and the lot of man. A single event will sometimes change the fortunes of a life. The reception of a piece of news to-day or to-morrow may prove a turning-point with us. Sometimes a discourse heard apparently by accident has converted a sinner. A chance word has left an impression on the mind which time could never efface. The casual meeting of a particular individual, under peculiar circumstances, makes or mars our whole worldly condition. The doing or the not doing one simple thing is decisive, not only of a man's pecuniary condition, but of his entire course of life, it may be of his conduct and character for ever.

Now these incidental and indirect agencies exert a momentous influence in the education of the young. Robert Nicoll, one of the sweetest and most devout of modern Scotch poets, at the age of seventeen wrote a tale for a child's periodical, which was undesignedly sent to a certain popular magazine. Had it been rejected, his tender heart would have sunk at the blow ; its acceptance decided him to become an author. The gifted Chatterton was indebted for his taste for English antiquities to the accidental circumstance of certain ancient manuscripts having fallen

into the hands of his father, who was a teacher, and who used the old papers that fell in his way to cover the writing-books of his scholars. To this trifling incident was owing a taste that shaped the whole history of that unfortunate youth. Linnæus was made one of the greatest of botanists by the circumstance of seeing a few rare plants in his father's garden. But why multiply these illustrations? Who can doubt that casual influences often decide, not only the occupation, but the intellectual and moral bias, the religious condition and the entire well-being, of a child? His being born and educated in the city makes him another man from what a country training would have made him. His attendance at a certain school, or his living in a particular neighbourhood, and falling among this or that class of companions, his intimacy with some good or bad boy, — all accidental circumstances, — rendered him just what he is.

Who has not seen some one event give a moral cast to the entire life? The early loss of a father or mother, a severe sickness, domestic reverses, the having some kind friend or some pernicious associate for years at our fireside, the reading of a particular book, laid on our table by another, or thrown by mere chance in our way, while we were young, — nay, so trivial a thing as the suspension of a striking engraving or painting where we saw it daily, — who can tell but either of these circumstances threw the

one decisive grain into that fearful scale which turned in our childhood for our weal or woe ?

Looking at the mighty agency of these slight matters, I have often felt that we neglected them too much in our estimate of the means of education. Is it not possible that, in our zeal and haste as educators, we overlook that which after all does more than systems and mechanical aids and outward and intended appliances, however multiplied, in making our children what they are ? Incidental influences are going on secretly and unseen, and yet, like imperceptible perspiration to the body, they do more than the obvious organs and functions toward deciding the health of our inner, immortal man. As the air we breathe depends for its life-giving power on a subtile and latent compound of diverse qualities, so is character formed and preserved by methods as mysterious in their blending as they are potent and decisive.

And now what is the great fountain of the influence I would describe ? Whence does the larger part of incidental education proceed ? Beyond question, it comes from the fireside. Much, it is true, comes from society ; that environs us, like the atmosphere, and in ways we know not affects our modes of thought, our habits of speech, our manners, and, indeed, everything that goes to make up the character. Direct instruction, it is true, exerts a vast influence, especially on the young mind ; the books we read do much to mould our opinions and

feelings ; our companions and friendships contribute largely to the great whole. But beyond them all, in this respect, is our *home.* The disposition, the temper, the principles, and the general cast of the actions of a child, depend on the incidental influences of the family he dwells in, to a degree of which some of us have never yet conceived. Many a parent is, on this account, tearing down with a strong right arm, while he is building up only with the left ; and his set lessons, and the teachers and schools he provides for his children, will therefore prove but untempered mortar to the tottering edifice.

Observe the effect of the common conversation of a family. The child hears thousands of words that drop accidentally through the day, and they touch and move the strongest springs of his character. He notices the manner in which the inmates address one another, and he silently falls into it. If they speak in a loud and harsh tone, so does he ; if gentleness and modesty and a subdued mode of speech predominate with them, they do also with him. And what are the great topics of conversation ? Are they the food on the table, — the faults of each other, or of their neighbours ? If so, the children think these are to be their great concern. Perhaps the conversation all turns upon business, speculations, losses and gains. Then who can be surprised, if the sons regard money as the chief good of life, and think education has no higher end than to fit one to accumulate prop-

erty ? Are dress and the fashions of the day the engrossing topics ? Why should we be disappointed that the daughters are anxious above all things to know what they shall wear, and how they shall make a figure in society ?

But let the great subjects of conversation be of a moral complexion, and how different will be the character of the children ! They hear the father speak often of industry, of honesty, and of philanthropy, as prime virtues. They see that he regards man as of more value than money ; that he loves his country, not merely as a place favorable to commerce or manufactures or agriculture, but as a land dedicated to liberty, and possessing institutions able to produce a noble race of men. This is what will make the son a true patriot, an active and benevolent citizen. Let the mother speak of virtue as the most precious jewel on earth, and of purity and kindness and diligence as the richest of robes, and then the daughter, emancipated from worldliness and vanity and indolence, will grow up an honor to her home and a God's token to the world.

The indirect effect of the prevalent subjects of conversation in a family can hardly be over-estimated. A common habit is to talk chiefly about other persons. But this is always unsafe ; it cherishes an uncharitable temper, for we soon come upon the faults of others when we begin to say much concerning them. And these faults are not referred to with

sympathy and compassion, as they should be, but too often with bitterness, or in derision or mere sport. This habit almost inevitably degenerates into gossip, that bane of all intellectual or moral excellence. Therefore would I counsel that our conversation be mainly upon things, not persons; upon subjects which we know to be safe, useful, enlarging to the mind, and improving to the heart. The world is full of such topics; it needs only a firm determination to keep them uppermost at the table and the fireside.

I do not counsel that long and set lectures be given on the good qualities referred to; this is not incidental, but formal instruction. No; what is needed are words fitly spoken, adapted to the feelings of the child at the time. Our Saviour taught little abstractly; he embraced favorable opportunities. When the birds passed by, he drew from them a lesson on trust in Providence. If he came, in his walks with his disciples, to the lily, he made it teach them the care of God for all his works, and the sin of undue anxiety. When the sun was rising in his glory, he spoke of himself as "the light of the world." He regarded, too, the varying moods of his hearers, and inculcated love to God or love to man, as the passing scene might suggest. Train up your child in this way, and as the hour is bright or shaded, as he is calm or excited, inquisitive or indifferent, so let your words be chosen. Let the wax be

melted and pliant, and the stamp of the seal will then be deep, beautiful, and enduring.

But beyond the power of all mere language is the influence of our own character and example. I do not allude to what we do consciously and for the sake of effect. It is the spirit we manifest, and the general tone of our conduct, that fall most effectively on those who witness them. What we customarily do in the presence of children affects them far more than what we occasionally say. We speak of moral as far greater than physical force. Do we exhibit this power? Is there a vein of it running through our every-day deportment? Are we pacific, free from the war spirit, gentle, forbearing, and forgiving? If parents respect each other, the sons are more likely to respect them. We desire our children to be pious and reverent; let them see that we are so ourselves. There is a tribe of Indians who shave the head, as a token of veneration for the Great Spirit. Their little ones, as they look daily on its emblem, must insensibly imbibe that virtue. The mere spectacle speaks louder than words. We wish our children to love the Bible; it is vain to command them to love it. But if they observe us to read and prize it, they will naturally incline to it themselves. Yes, who can tell what virtue comes from one such example. Precious book! —

"How many mothers, by their infants' bed,
Thy holy, blessed, pure, child-saving words have read."

"Thou teachest age to die,
And youth in truth unsullied up to grow!
A sunbeam sent from God, an everlasting bow!"

Indirect teaching and indirect example, who can estimate their power! They control the mental and moral destinies of the race. We may require a child to do an act for the sake of his good; but when by a silent influence we have led him voluntarily to seek and pursue that good, — when we have led him to love goodness for itself alone, — when we have brought him to feel that, under God, he must form his own character and work out his own salvation, — then have we implanted in him a root of enduring excellence. Ages cannot tell his obligations to such a benefactor. By indirect influences and an attractive example wake up a child's self-respect, and place him, as you then will, in the path of self-education, and you give him an impulse for life. It is as dew to the parched earth, or as the summer shower, calling forth an unfading verdure, an immortal beauty.

In the great work of education we see a vast array of outward means, instruments, aids, and appliances. But let us never forget that there is one agency mightier than them all, which we do not see. It is secret, subtile, impalpable, yet ever operating and ever influential. It is the power of example. What we teach our children is one thing, what we do in their presence is quite another. We give

them direct and formal exhortations, and these have their weight; but far more is there in the remark we let fall incidentally, or the conversation they overhear when we least imagine it. Nor is it the course we recommend by words, but our own conduct, which goes deepest into their hidden being. "The infant mimics the motion of your hand, or the expression of your countenance; but at ten years he adopts," not the outward, but the inward part of your life; he adopts "the principles of your conduct, and imbibes the spirit of your heart." This it is which our children daily watch, and this it is which, more than all things else, will form their opinions and decide their character, in youth, manhood, and through their whole future existence.

The parent, let us suppose, professes religion; but to what purpose, if his child sees him as worldly-minded, as avaricious, as fond of luxury, display, and fashion, as those who make no profession? Why should we laud forgiveness, if we are ourselves implacable, laying up injuries, and resenting them by our coldness, if not by open retaliation? Children notice every inconsistency of this kind; and to teach with our lips what we unteach — consciously and continually, perhaps, too — by our lives, what is it but to shake their confidence, not only in ourselves, but in the reality of religion, and even in the very foundation of good morals?

No Jesuitry can succeed with a child. The at-

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In the great work of education we see a vast array of outward means, instruments, aids, and appliances. But let us never forget that there is one agency mightier than them all, which we do not see. It is secret, subtile, impalpable, yet ever operating and ever influential. It is the power of example. What we teach our children is one thing, what we do in their presence is quite another. We give

them direct and formal exhortations, and these have their weight; but far more is there in the remark we let fall incidentally, or the conversation they overhear when we least imagine it. Nor is it the course we recommend by words, but our own conduct, which goes deepest into their hidden being. "The infant mimics the motion of your hand, or the expression of your countenance; but at ten years he adopts," not the outward, but the inward part of your life; he adopts "the principles of your conduct, and imbibes the spirit of your heart." This it is which our children daily watch, and this it is which, more than all things else, will form their opinions and decide their character, in youth, manhood, and through their whole future existence.

The parent, let us suppose, professes religion; but to what purpose, if his child sees him as worldly-minded, as avaricious, as fond of luxury, display, and fashion, as those who make no profession? Why should we laud forgiveness, if we are ourselves implacable, laying up injuries, and resenting them by our coldness, if not by open retaliation? Children notice every inconsistency of this kind; and to teach with our lips what we unteach — consciously and continually, perhaps, too — by our lives, what is it but to shake their confidence, not only in ourselves, but in the reality of religion, and even in the very foundation of good morals?

No Jesuitry can succeed with a child. The at-

tempt to keep up good appearances with him will certainly fail. We cannot deceive him; he penetrates through every disguise, discovers each attempt at duplicity, and looks straight into our hearts. Therefore must we be — not try to seem, but *be* — what we wish our children to become. Just as kind and amiable as we desire to see them, and just as fretful, impatient, and selfish as we expect them to be, must we be ourselves. What we do sincerely, that and no more will they believe in, sympathize with, and permanently imitate.

Let me at this point insert a caution against misapprehension. I have spoken warmly of the power of incidental means and undesigned influences in deciding the character. Let it not be thought I would discontinue or disparage the direct means of instruction now in use. No, let us still have teachers, and earnest and faithful ones. Better teachers and better manuals of instruction the age loudly demands. Let the Sunday school be prized and cherished by parent, teacher, and child. But, meantime, let us heed well the great work going on out of all schools. Society, companions, and, above all, home, — to these we should give new attention and untiring care. Watch events, occasions, and circumstances; they enfold the germs of many a flower; for weal or for woe, they shed a daily influence on the young. Through them we may instil those two great prinples, — the pillars of all true excellence, — a deep,

sincere piety, and a steady self-denial. If we meditate upon our God and Father ourselves, and if we show that his will is the law of our own lives, we shall do much to make our children remember their Creator in the days of their youth. Let us deny appetite, worldly propensities, and all that is selfish, and we shall need few words to win the all-observing child, full of sympathy and prone to imitation, to enter himself that path which our Saviour once trod, and to which he so earnestly calls us.

domestic peace. If he find himself drawn by any good quality toward one of his children, he will at once seek for some equally amiable property in the others. And should he fail to discover any such, he will pity the errors he perceives, pardon his children's infirmities, and pray for an even-handed justice; and soon will he find that his way is no longer unequal.

Few things are more important in the education of a family than a perfect agreement between the husband and wife. If the mother feel objections to the father's modes of government, she should not express them in presence of their children. One parent should not allow a child to do what the other has forbidden. They ought to make suggestions to each other, of course, with freedom and mutual respect and affection. But let this be done when they are alone. A small child especially should never imagine that his parents differ in regard to the mode of his education. Before he is old enough to understand the reasons of their differences of opinion, it can only do him harm to hear their discussions.

Little children should believe that their parents agree as to what is best for them; otherwise, neither parent can expect implicit obedience. If a child sees his father and mother arrayed against each other, he does not know which to obey, he loses confidence in both, and at last even in the distinction between

right and wrong. How can children respect their parents, when they hear them in constant altercation on any subject whatever? But if that subject be their own management and discipline, they will soon lose all regard for the judgment of either of their parents. Or, if this be not the result, they will take sides with one parent and against the other, and the house will be divided against itself. Let them, therefore, reserve the discussion of their different plans of education to a private hour; and never let the one undo the work of the other, or counteract his or her commands to their children.

The indirect influence of so slight a thing as the names and epithets by which parents and children address each other is by no means unimportant. Many advise that children should speak to their parents as their equals. They think it appears stiff in them to say "Sir" to their father; they approve of a greater familiarity of address. But do we see any improvement in the character and manners of those children who adopt this equalizing tone to their parents! I admire intimacy and freedom between parent and child; but when all restraint is destroyed, and the father and mother are treated with disrespect, nay, as we often now see, with absolute rudeness, I am led to ask whether the old was not the better mode of addressing parents. If your child does not address you, his guardian and guide, with as much respect even as you do your neighbour and equal in

age and station, pray what have you gained by allowing him to lay aside that little word "Sir"?

Still more objectionable is the practice on the part of the parent of applying low and coarse epithets to his child, either as tokens of affection or in moments of passion. "The little toad" may sound pleasantly to a mother, but such language is a part of the great means by which the taste of a family becomes depraved, and hence their morals often corrupted. Sure I am that none can apologize in their calmer moments for the use of such phrases as "you villain," "you rascal," &c., which phrases, and others equally objectionable, are by no means uncommon on the lips of parents who would resent the appellation of immoral or vulgar. The connection between low language and a low character is closer than most of us imagine. Let the parent, then, resist the beginnings of this evil.

Nothing contributes more to the work of incidental culture than a habit of observation in the child. We are surrounded by objects with whose extent and variety the longest life cannot make us fully acquainted. There lie at our very feet treasures of knowledge which the utmost application on our part will not exhaust. Within the present century what researches have been made in the physical sciences, and what splendid discoveries in every department of nature do we constantly witness! Reason dare not predict, imagination cannot conceive, that any

boundaries will ever be found to the progress of the human mind in the realms of science and art.

Now this is the scene on which every child enters at his birth. He is instantly a discoverer, placed in a world filled with objects adapted to his powers and capacities, as they shall be successively unfolded from infancy onward to old age. And his Creator has furnished him with all the instruments and helps which for the first few years he will need to prosecute his investigations. How simple, yet how almost omnipotent, are these few bodily senses! The eye, capable of grasping myriads of objects as they pass within its field of vision! The ear, susceptible to the countless sounds that fill and enrich the all-encompassing atmosphere! Think of the wealth within the reach of the other marvellous organs of sense, and you at once perceive that one thing only is needful to bring stores of this wealth within our personal appropriation; and that is *the habit of observation.*

Let the little child be trained to see and hear every thing around him, and he is made heir to a fortune which no acres or mines could have bestowed on him. Leave him to grow up without this habit, and, though in the midst of abundance, he is poor and miserable. I have somewhere read an account of a walk taken by two boys, the one after the other, entitled "Eyes and no Eyes, or the Art of Seeing." It gives an admirable illustration of the dif-

ferent degrees of knowledge gained by different individuals amid the same scenes. One sees something new every step he takes, the other sees nothing; to the former the walk was full of interest, and has left on his mind delightful recollections; to the latter it was a dull scene from beginning to end, and he remembers it only with aversion or indifference.

If, then, you would open before your children springs of unfailing happiness, teach them, both by precept and example, never to pass, without seeing it, any object which may afford them the least information. There is little hope of a girl who always replies to your question, What took place where you were? "I did not mind." She always should mind; for heedlessness is the root of manifold evils. It exposes us to constant dangers, and it cuts off many an opportunity to learn something useful.

Montaigne, in his remarks on the education of a boy, says, "Let him examine every man's talent; a peasant, a bricklayer, or any casual passenger; a man may learn something from every one of these in their several capacities, and something will be picked out of their discourse, whereof some use may be made at one time or another; nay, even the folly and weakness of others will contribute to his instruction. Let an honest curiosity be planted in him to inquire after every thing."

It is to this habit of noticing all that came within their view that we owe the great number of self-

educated men who have adorned the history of our race. We can supply, to a large extent, the deficiencies of a poor education, if we employ earnestly, in after life, all our faculties of observation. While, on the other hand, no amount of academical instruction, no array of diplomas and degrees can render one eminent in a knowledge of the outward universe, who having eyes seeth not, and having ears heareth not.

Strongly as I have recommended in this volume the culture of a child's moral and spiritual nature, I would never undervalue an education that prepares one for this tangible world. Our Creator and Father gave us this world no less than that which is invisible. The child should therefore be qualified to know and appreciate its objects. We are to educate his senses as well as his spirit. He must be stored with a liberal knowledge of external things; matters of fact, real life, the world just as it is, — let this be a careful study of his earlier years. Let him not be left ignorant of practical affairs; do not suffer him, in his devotion to books, nor yet to business, to dwindle down to that ludicrous figure, "the absent man."

We educate our children indirectly by those peculiarities in which we allow ourselves, that are subject to their observation. You desire your son to notice every thing which occurs in his presence; perhaps you teach him to do this. Forget not, then,

that his keen eye is fixed constantly upon you; and remember also that he will *imitate* whatever he observes. So far, indeed, does this principle extend, that we often see a boy incline his head precisely like his father. A train of sons shall walk up the aisle of a church, each having the same limp with the head of the family. Whatever be the manners prevalent at the table, the children carry them wherever they dine. The daughters are erect or otherwise, modest or bold, gentle or boisterous, according as the mother is in these several respects. If the parents use vulgar language, or a profusion of exclamations and epithets, so do the children. Are they refined in their conversation, and subdued and guarded in their modes of expression, so are the sons and daughters.

Who, then, can exaggerate the importance of care on the part of the parents in regard to personal peculiarities? What a motive have they to watch their own manners, language, and tones, and their habits in every particular. Look daily at your children and see yourselves as in a mirror. You cannot look there too earnestly; for it will lead you to amend your errors of deportment, and so to bear yourself in presence of your family that you will not blush to see your own image reflected all around you.

Incidental education leads a child, not only to imitate the manners, but also to catch the mind, the

principles, and the inmost feelings of his parents. He sees, as it were, their naked hearts, and no sqoner does he see than he begins to transcribe their features. Whether his pattern be right or wrong, he follows it implicitly. The parent writes down some sentence touching immortal interests. Happy if it be pure truth; but be it truth or error, it is borne away at once by his child and committed to a stereotype plate. With what care, knowing this fearful fact, should he record each sentence. How clearly does it now appear that the personal virtue of the parent, his inward purity, expressed by love to man and love to God, and by the strictest obedience to his commands, can alone save his child. This course alone will reveal to the parent the way of duty, and enable him to be a safe guide therein. So is it that "to love and to do the Holy Will is the ultimate way, not only to know the truth, but to lead others," and emphatically little children, "to know it."

The view here presented may appear to some dark and depressing; the responsibility seems greater than can be borne. But there is one consideration which will do much to reconcile us to this condition. It is for the moral good of the parent himself to be subject to this solemn weight. How many fathers and mothers would have neglected their own characters perhaps altogether, had not the parental relation quickened them to reflection! They have been brought to think of their own future interests in

meditating upon those of their children. "The consideration that their own characters would be communicated to those whom they loved more than themselves, that their children would receive from them principles, habits, and feelings, has induced a watchfulness, a regularity of speech and conduct, and an application to duty, by which their own souls have been purified. Children are inestimable blessings by calling forth the consciences of their parents. The instructions we impart come back upon ourselves."

On the other hand, we may not forget that parental unfaithfulness not only blights the character of the children, but reacts with a terrible force on the parents themselves. By an old law of our Puritan ancestors, cursing or smiting a parent by a child over sixteen years of age was a capital offence, with three saving clauses, one of which was the child's having been "unchristianly neglected in its education." This was a reasonable exception; for why should the whole penalty of the offence be laid on the child, when the parent contributed so largely to occasion it? If the father and mother consciously fail in the discharge of their duty, on them should rest the retribution of that failure.

Under all laws and in every condition of society, and I may add, amid our varying modes of religious education, this will hold true, that the parent must reap as he sows. If he do his own duty faithfully,

then, even though his child prove reprobate, his reward in the form of an approving conscience and in the reflected virtue of his efforts upon his own character is sure as the heavens' established course. Let him neglect his duty, and it is equally certain that the tares he has sown, when they spring up in the debasement of his offspring, will pierce him like the poisoned arrow, and destroy his peace, if not his very life.

CHAPTER XXII.

INDIRECT INFLUENCE OF THE MOTHER.

THE indirect influence of the mother can hardly be exaggerated. Her conduct, tone, and spirit are a vital part of that atmosphere by which the moral life of a child is sustained. She should act as the presiding genius of the family in this respect. Her air and manner should be such as to quell the waves of domestic discord. Indeed, her power is such that by fidelity to her nature she will spread the sunshine of joyous hearts and loving tempers over the whole household.

In the language of Amié Martin we see that "in children sentiment precedes intelligence; the first answer to the maternal smile is the first dawn of intelligence; the first sensation is the responding caress. Comprehension begins in feeling; hence, to her who first arouses the feelings, who first awakens the tenderness, must belong the happiest influences. She is not, however, to teach virtue, but to inspire it. What is a child in relation to a tutor? An ignorant being whom he is called upon

to instruct. What is a child in relation to a mother? An immortal being, whose soul it is her business to train for immortality. Good schoolmasters make good scholars, — good mothers make good men." Who, then, does not look with an unquenchable interest on our mothers? Who can over-estimate their share in the work of incidental education?

The relation between the mother and her children presents constant opportunities for the kind of influence in question. There are two points toward which her attention should be specially directed. The first is health; during the period of infancy, she cannot be too watchful in laying the corner-stone of a sound constitution. She will consider that whatever other gifts or acquisitions may be within the reach of her children, if they are sickly and feeble, these things can be of little value to them. Let the days passed in the cradle be marked by care of the health, let the air of the room be kept pure, the first food of the child be simple and wholesome, and above all, let the system of drugging be avoided, and there is good hope for the future.

During the middle period of childhood the chief points must be to continue a plain but abundant diet, to guard the child against the changes of weather, and to secure a liberal amount of physical exercise. The mother may do much to make household pursuits a means of exercise; but her daughters need also the open air. Let them have ample time to

walk, ride, trundle hoop and sport with their companions. Give them the time, and in most cases nothing more will be necessary. They have at this age an instinctive love of being abroad and engaging in amusements that invigorate while they gratify.

But the period which follows presents a difficulty on the subject of health. The daughter becomes now inactive; she is less and less disposed to take physical exercise. Perhaps she thinks it undignified, and dreads nothing so much as the appellation of a romp. No more may she join in the frolicsome scenes of the past. She must move about the house with a measured step, and to walk in the streets with any other than a staid and matronly gait would hazard, perhaps destroy, her reputation. There are exceptions to these remarks; some girls continue so free in their movements as to need a caution against being rude. But in general what I have said is true; and it requires the constant care of the mother to devise means and methods of physical exercise for her daughters. Unless she encourage such methods as are agreeable in themselves, furnish an "attractive industry," countenance the fireside dance, the frequent walk and the pleasant ride, she must not be disappointed if she see tokens of a decaying health.

This suggestion is the more needed, from the tendency in our age to increase very much the amount of study required of our elder daughters. They are in some schools forced along with such speed, that,

unless we augment proportionally their opportunities for exercise, it will not surprise me to see diseases of the spine, pulmonary complaints, and dyspepsy scattered broadcast among this class of scholars. If, especially, we add lessons in drawing and confinement to the piano, hour after hour in the day, to the tasks of the school-room, we have no right to expect health unless we add still further abundant means both of domestic exercise and locomotive recreation. It rests mainly with our mothers to say which branch shall be taken of this fearful alternative.

The other point to which I referred is this, the strengthening of the mind and the culture of common sense. We see many mothers anxious for the school education of their daughters, and desirous of their being praised as fine scholars, who feel little solicitude apparently for the expansion of their judgment in every-day affairs. They do not put forth that indirect influence which they constantly might, to lead them to think and talk of the common pursuits of life. Why should not a girl know the prices of the various articles used in the family, and where and how they are purchased? Why should she not join in the conversation upon rents, taxes, laws, and to some extent in what is said upon politics? Let her know something, I would say, of her father's avocation, and of all the various employments, arts, trades, and professions in the world. Let her not grow up a mere bookworm, nor yet be limited to the little round of domestic pursuits.

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Were our daughters educated in this manner, they would be qualified for the responsible station of the head of a family. We should not see so many possessed at the time of their marriage of "every kind of sense but common sense." We give our sons an invigorating mental culture; why should not daughters have the same? Let their minds be stored with science, and their intellectual powers be trained to the utmost, in the school-room. But do not leave them here; home should pursue this work; fathers and mothers should make it their distinct plan and their steady effort so to educate, not the boy only, but the girl also, that with all their "gettings they will get understanding." Then will the future husband have an intelligent companion, — one for whose mental powers he will never blush. Then if, by a sad providence, the wife be left widowed, the sole head of her household, she will be prepared for the exigency. Nay, to look no farther, in justice to her nature, and in obedience to the claims of her immortal capacities, let the mind of the girl and the woman be harmoniously and perfectly developed, — a true image, like that of man, of their common God and Father.

An important part of indirect education consists in surrounding the young with objects which elevate and refine the taste. Much is now done for the intellect in our schools, and on the Sabbath we have a system of moral and religious culture of exceeding

value. But we lack corresponding means and exertions for the purification of the tastes of our youth, and the improvement of the social influences around them. The love of gain is becoming more and more intense, and material interests are fast acquiring the ascendency among our aims and efforts. Our children drink early into this spirit. The boy is told that he goes to school to prepare himself to transact business and accumulate property; and the girl is promised a high place in society if she is well educated. And the Sunday school too often makes success in this life the ultimate purpose of its training.

Success is important; let us amass wealth and develop our material resources; and let us seek an elevation in society, if we do it by honorable and Christian methods. But let us not leave our children amid the low and comparatively trivial pursuits of earth and time. Let not self be the centre and circumference of their aspirations. Set before them still higher objects; impress on them a sense of the beautiful; make them familiar with the principles of taste, and enrich their minds with the treasures of imagination.

It is to be regretted that we have so few means as yet in this country for the culture of these noble faculties. In the Old World there are galleries of sculpture, halls of paintings, venerable and magnificent cathedrals, and other similar attractions, often open to the people free of expense. When shall we

rival the Old World in this respect? Time must pass first; but we have many elements even now for a generous popular education in the appreciation of works of taste. We are beginning to have exhibitions of paintings, art-unions, and associations of architects. Let our parents and teachers encourage their children to visit as many works of art as possible.

A coarse taste is closely connected with vice. As a moral defence, therefore, of the young, we should familiarize them with objects and scenes that tend to refine the taste. Let there be collections of pictures, gatherings of flowers, floral processions, water-works and fountains, and every instrumentality for educating the eye, and through that purifying the spirit. Nor let the ear be forgotten; music is a spiritual exercise; in its best uses it tends to exalt the mind and amend the heart. Where the soul is preoccupied with a love of good, the access of what is low, sensual, and debasing is made slow and difficult. Take, then, your children to the concert-room; let them from their earliest days enjoy liberally recreations of which music forms at least a portion. Purity, piety, and benevolence — not to mention a fund of inexhaustible happiness — are connected with good music. Economize in other respects, that you may have means to supply your children from this blessed storehouse.

Fill your home, and surround it, as far as possi-

ble, with pure, attractive, and impressive objects. Were a child encompassed by the beautiful forms and the harmonious breathings of painting, sculpture, architecture, and music, and did he at the same time receive a corresponding treatment of affection and sympathy from parents, friends, relatives, and associates, terror and punishment, together with the moral evil that occasions them, would disappear, and love and beauty would become the guides of his actions, the rules of his life, and their own exceeding recompense.

I am led here to name, among the means of incidental education, the power of a pleasant voice. No apology will be necessary for the repetition in this place of a few thoughts I have elsewhere given to the public. It is usual to attempt the management of children either by corporal punishment, or by rewards addressed to the senses, or by words alone. There is one other means of government, the power and importance of which are seldom regarded. I refer to the human voice. A blow may be inflicted on a child, accompanied by words so uttered as to counteract entirely its intended effect. Or, the parent may use language in the correction of her child, not objectionable in itself, yet spoken in a tone which more than defeats its influence.

We are by no means aware of the power of the voice in swaying the feelings of the soul. The anecdote of the good lady in regard to her minister's

sermon is to the point. She had heard a discourse from him which pleased her exceedingly. She expressed to a friend the hope that he would preach it again. "Perhaps," said her friend in reply, "he may print it." "Ah," said she, "he could not print that *holy tone*." There is a tone in the pulpit which, false as is the taste from which it proceeds, does indeed work wonders. So is there a tone in our intercourse with children which may be among the most efficient aids in their right education.

Let any one endeavour to recall the image of a fond mother long since at rest in heaven. Her sweet smile and ever clear countenance are brought vividly to recollection. So also is her voice; and blessed is that parent who is endowed with a pleasing utterance. What is it which lulls the infant to repose? It is no array of mere words. There is no charm to the untaught one in letters, syllables, and sentences. It is the sound which strikes its little ear that soothes and composes it to sleep. A few notes, however unskilfully arranged, if uttered in a soft tone, are found to possess a magic influence. Think we that this influence is confined to the cradle? No, it is diffused over every age, and ceases not while the child dwells beneath the parental roof. Is the boy growing rude in manner and boisterous in speech? I know of no instrument so sure to control these tendencies as the gentle tones of a mother. She who speaks to her son harshly does

but give to his conduct the sanction of her own example. She pours oil on the already raging flame.

In the pressure of duty we are liable to utter ourselves hastily to our children. Perhaps a threat is expressed in a loud and irritating tone. Instead of allaying the passions of the child, it serves directly to increase them. Every fretful expression awakens in him the same spirit which produced it. So does a pleasant voice call up agreeable feelings. Whatever disposition, therefore, we would encourage in a child, the same should be manifested in the tone with which we address him.

There is nothing more desirable in a daughter than intelligence joined to a gentle spirit. The mind is fashioned and furnished, in the main, at school. But the character of the affections is derived chiefly from home. How inestimable is the confidence of that mother in producing kind feelings in the bosoms of her children, who never permits herself to speak to them with a loud voice, and in harsh, unkind tones!

I have heard of a father, who, when his children became engaged in a dispute, would at once require them to unite in a song. The blending of their voices in harmony was soon found to subdue their angry and contentious feelings. There is a native, spontaneous, unsought music. It consists in the tones which issue from her who is overflowing with Christian love. While, then, I would advise the mother to the culture of a pleasant voice, and warn

her of the evils of addressing her children harshly, I would still more earnestly counsel her to discipline her *heart*. Out of a kind heart come naturally kind tones. She who would train up her family in the sweet spirit of Christ can succeed best and most enduringly of all, by cherishing such sentiments as shall seek their own unbidden expression in gentle yet all-powerful tones.

The power of a patient and forbearing spirit over the disposition of a child is too important to pass unnoticed. Many things occur daily to irritate the young child. He is suffering from some pain ; he is tired, or hungry, or thirsty, or has lost some plaything. These appear small things, perhaps, to the busy mother ; she cannot lay aside her work to attend to them. And yet the neglect to do this, even for a few minutes, may lay the foundation in her child of a fretful spirit for life. Every reasonable want of these little ones should be immediately relieved. And in regard to what we think their unreasonable wants, they are real ones to them, and would appear so, perhaps, to us, were we little children ourselves.

The example of a patient mother soon spreads among her older children. When they see her wait on the infant, and toil by day and by night over the sick one in the family, and when they observe her calm and kind with her domestics, unrepining in her own illness or fatigue, always active, and always

cheerful, they insensibly imbibe the same beautiful spirit themselves. The father is perplexed by his business, and weary with labor and care. Sometimes, perhaps, he comes home excited and irritable. But if his children witness in him constant efforts to be mild, even-tempered, and patient, they cannot but learn to control themselves.

Amid the various conditions and characters of a household there is a continual demand for the culture of mental tranquillity and Christian forbearance. One of the children meets with a sudden and dangerous accident; it requires great self-possession to do promptly and with good judgment what ought to be done for him. The little girl has torn her dress, perhaps carelessly, and for the hundredth time. The mother is excited by it, and, unless habitually patient, she may do or say that of which she will afterwards repent. Here is a boy who is bedridden with some chronic disease. He is made childish and fretful by his sufferings, and what a store of patience does the mother require to watch over him by day and by night, to give up the pure air and cheerful society she could find abroad, and sit by his side and adapt herself to his fitful humors!

It is said that the love of the mother is usually greatest for the sick or the deformed one of her children. A beautiful compensation of Providence is this! But it will require an almost unearthly fortitude to bear such a lot without ever repining or ever

becoming impatient. She who bears herself firmly as well as tenderly through a long trial of this kind, earns richly that crown which is reserved for those who "endure unto the end." Her example sheds a perpetual light through her dwelling, and she cannot fail to infuse a portion of her divine spirit into the breasts of her children.

CHAPTER XXIII.

PARENTAL ANXIETIES.

THAT great question propounded originally in the hill-country of Judea, and in relation to him who in after years was to herald the Messiah, is always raised in the heart of the thoughtful parent when first intrusted with the care of a mortal, immortal being: — "What manner of child shall this be?" The little one, all unaware of its own fearful destinies, is to other bosoms an object of untold anxieties. There are two spirits watching and waiting round it, to whom, from the earliest to the latest moment of its life, it is henceforth to be a fountain either of joy or of grief.

First comes the anxious inquiry, Are the organs and functions of its body, that workmanship of God, so "fearfully and wonderfully made," all perfect and sound? If this question be answered affirmatively, another quickly presses on its footsteps, Are the powers of its mind sane and healthful? Does it show signs of intelligence? That interrogatory cannot be answered at once. But if the months and

years, as they pass, at length relieve all anxiety on that point, yet another issue comes up. How shall this our child be established in the world? What is to be his calling? And what will help him to succeed in that calling? In what schools, and how, shall he best be trained for it? This daughter, — what is to be her fortune in life? O for some magic power to reveal to us her future condition!

But have I unrolled the entire map, and shown all the regions of parental anxiety? Ah, no! there is one more yet, and great, indeed, it is. On any wise and prudent estimate of life, how insignificant does every other solicitude appear, when compared with this: — What is to be the *character* of our child? Will it be such that we can look upon it with satisfaction, and hear it spoken of without a pang or a blush? Have we here before us one who will reflect the smile of his Father in heaven, and to whom Christ and virtue will be dear? O, if this question also could be answered as we wish, peace would be on our pillow, and sunshine on our path.

It seems among the mysteries of Providence that one little being should have power so to hold in its tiny hand that balance in whose scales are to be placed, through all their coming years, the chief joys and the most pungent sorrows of two other care-burdened hearts. Why is it so? Must this be of necessity? Have we no retreat from so per-

ilous a position ? Is there nothing we can do to assuage this flood of anxieties ?

In many respects God is a sovereign dealing with us as it seemeth to him good. Our own destiny is to a large extent at the disposal of Providence. So, also, is that of our children. Whether they shall possess all the faculties that constitute a perfect child, a sound mind in a sound body, depends entirely on a power beyond our own. To what He wills, be the cup bitter as it may, we must bow with unquestioning submission. In regard, also, to the establishment of our children in the world, and to all those circumstances which in a secular aspect will prove either their bane or their blessing, to an immeasurable degree, their lot is in the hand of the Lord, and with him is the disposing thereof. It is comparatively little that we can do, if we desire it, to insure them an affluent fortune, or to place them in elevated and honorable stations. There is a finger that guides these and all kindred movements, of which we know nothing. We can do something to shape their course and results, but after all our best-laid plans may be frustrated, and all the hopes that rested on them driven away like the chaff before the wind.

How often do we see ambitious men toil to lay the foundations of a conspicuous family ! They heap up wealth, they seek office and place ; perhaps they intermarry with the rich, the honored, or the in-

tellectually great. A generation passes, and their sons squander their wealth, become addicted to vice, or degenerate in mind, and the aspirations of the father prove but "the baseless fabric of a vision." Sometimes a similar issue is consummated by dis ease and death. Father and son, mother and daughter, are successively called away; and the fortune so fondly looked upon as a tower of family pride and strength is scattered among strangers.

But, as respects that other great fountain of pa rental anxieties, the character of their children, if that be made the supreme concern, God has given them power to do much — not, indeed, everything, but very much — toward deciding the course of its waters. When, in view of its moral and religious condition, the father and the mother inquire, "What manner of child shall this be?" the reply depends, in no ordinary degree, upon themselves.

It is for the parent to decide what instructions his child shall receive. The nursery is the first schoolroom, and the mother the primary teacher. It depends on her tuition what conceptions shall be earliest given to the little one of this mysterious world. If her face has the sweetness of maternal virtue, and her tones are ever gentle and soothing, then the newcomer will believe himself in a happy world. Alas for him, if he encounter in his very cradle a countenance marred with selfishness and sin! Pitiable is his lot, terrible must earth seem to him, if his tender

ear is shocked by the harsh notes of an unfeeling mother !

The character of the child will receive readily the impress of piety if the father be a true representative of our Father in heaven. It is for him to determine whether the earliest idea this little one will have of that Being is, that he is wise and good, full of all lovely and all venerable attributes, or the reverse of this, an object of aversion, if not of positive terror.

A fundamental part of the character consists of conscience. This faculty, it is true, is the gift of God. But its development and its integrity depend mainly on parental education. Let the mother never mislead her child during his first years in regard to right and wrong, and his moral judgments in after years will seldom be erroneous. The father can do much to decide whether this inward guide shall be trustworthy, leading to duty and life, or perverted and blind, conducting to error and ruin. The first lessons on this subject always sink deepest ; the unworn soil produces the most luxuriant harvest.

The anxious parent must watch his own lips ; for out of his mouth are the issues of his child's life. The language of a mother is graven as with the point of a diamond on the infant mind. Other inmates of the family are uttering many words in the young ear, but the flowing years will wash them for the most part away. Not so with hers ; they with their influ-

ence will abide. The father is dropping casual expressions, unaware, perhaps, of the little listener at his side, who is drinking them greedily in. Yet think of the power of these expressions! The stream now rolls quietly along, depositing on its banks a life-giving sediment, but anon it flows over, and leaves in some valley stagnant waters, that in summer days produce miasma and death. Who, then, as he loves and fears for his child, will not save him, so far as his own example goes, from the moral peril of corrupt communications at the fire side?

We are anxious that the future man should be pure, filled with good principles, and established in good habits. Let us, then, fashion the child accordingly. We have before us a mind that is pliant and ductile; now is the time to give it its true direction. The elm in the nursery can be bent, by a slight effort, to any shape we desire; let it grow up to a tree, and no force can bend its massive trunk. The germs of a good character are obedience, truthfulness, affection, and moral independence. Plant them in the child, and you need not fear that they will be wanting in the man.

A great source of parental solicitude is the companionships of children. Cowper felt the dangers from this quarter so keenly, that he wrote against a public education. Many parents would secure their children by shutting them out from society. But is

this a wise course? Were it not better, instead of secluding a boy from the world, to fortify his mind with correct principles, and confirm him in good habits, and then, imploring for him the shield of God, send him forth thus armed to resist evil counsels and examples, and overcome temptation? Can one by a life spent in moral hermitage become a strong man and an accomplished Christian? Trial alone, we know, can test the character. Is it, then, wise to exclude a child from every scene and situation in which he can be tried? To discriminate on this subject, and impose none but healthful restraints, is no easy task, it is true. But wisdom, I think, forbids all extremes; let, then, our anxiety shun extremity in this respect. "Guarded exposure" is probably the best position to form a child's character.

We are anxious that our children should have a religious faith; it would shock us to think they might become infidels or skeptics. Most of us desire them to embrace the tenets of our peculiar denomination of Christians. But let us not forget that we have no security for their believing according to our heart unless we give them full and distinct religious instruction. If we neglect to do this, they will probably either have no definite opinions on the subject, or believe according to what they may happen to hear in casual conversation among their companions, or what is instilled into their minds either

by the scoffing unbeliever or the proselyting bigot. Some views, of one kind or another, in regard to God, the Bible, and the nature, duty, and destiny of man, they will undoubtedly have. If, as a parent, you care at all what they are to be, perform now the great share you can to decide their complexion.

In regard both to the instructions and the habits of a child, it is not possible, I think, to keep him from being exposed to evil persuasions and evil examples. We should set it down, that poisonous influences, sooner or later, will distil error into his ear. If we do this, we shall prepare him for the danger; our good lessons will then pour themselves in at the time of need like a healing balm. So in respect to our children's moral habits; they will see and hear much adapted to pollute their characters. Shall we leave them unarmed, unprotected, in the conflict with sin? The seasons are passing swiftly on, and as sure as they live they will reap a spiritual harvest of some kind from seeds sown in society. It is for us to determine whether such seeds shall be plentifully intermingled as will prevent a crop of unsightly weeds, and insure fair flowers and rich fruits.

An alarming feature of this age is the increase of juvenile depravity. Our houses of correction and reform schools are crowded with the young. "I have seen them," says an eyewitness, "gathered at the bar of justice, mere boys and girls, on whose young faces sin had but commenced the work of

disfigurement. The image of God was tarnished, but by no means as yet effaced. To save these and such as these," he adds, "all the legal measures in the world would be unavailing. — Reformation must come from *within*, *outwards*. It must commence with the *soul*."

And now who is to begin this great work? You have only to look at the origin of most of this juvenile crime for a reply to this question. These children are usually convicted of "stubbornness." And why are they stubborn? Because they have been neglected at home. They have not been governed, instructed, and trained by their parents. What parent can tell whether the dearest child of his own, if thus culpably neglected, may not yet be arraigned before some court of justice? Certain it is, that if we allow our children to disobey us, and leave them unrestrained and morally uneducated at the fireside, we contribute a share toward that melancholy degeneracy which is crowding our courts and prisons with juvenile offenders.

The burden of parental anxieties is much increased by the multitude of influences which are more and more taking our children and youth away from their homes. They soon think themselves men and women, and many of them, impatient of being confined to their native spot, roam abroad in search of gain and preferment. Some parents partake in this spirit, and consent readily to part with their children.

Not a few send them away to some boarding-school, without a thought of the evil consequences. Let it be that some immediate advantages come from this course. Doubtless a boy learns better to take care of his clothing and personal effects when he has no mother to lean upon at his side. His manners, also, are likely to be improved by the change. But these are all external things; the internal welfare of the child must suffer more or less by his being removed from home.

Teachers constantly tell us that they need the co-operation of parents. They want them to look to daily for support in their plans of instruction and government. They wish to refer their scholars frequently to their example and influence. We are assured by them that, as a general principle, their best scholars, and those whose deportment is most commendable, come every day from the home influence of father and mother, brothers and sisters. No stranger, however kind and faithful, can supply this domestic influence; let a child grow up without it, and there is a certain gentle, humanized tone of character which you miss in him. We see this often in those unfortunate individuals who were bereft in their boyhood of a mother by death. Nothing can ever atone for that loss.

One of the evils of college life is, that it takes the student away from the softening, sanctifying environments of home. It deprives him of those genial

fireside influences which are most of all needed at that period of life when the intellect is expanding and the character is receiving a permanent impress. The wise parent will retain his son in the bosom of his family, at almost any sacrifice, until his preparatory education is completed. He will relieve himself of that fearful anxiety which every conscientious parent must feel when compelled early to part from his child.

Home influence is needed, among its other offices, to form in the young correct habits of conversation. No circle is so favorable to this work as that of an exemplary family. The parent may well think with solicitude of the daily influence of his manner of conversation. If he is careless in his modes of expression, or vulgar, so will his child be; let him be guarded and grammatical, his example is imitated. I once knew a father who had never learned a line of grammar, yet, through observation and watchfulness, so correct was he in his use of language, that he often criticized the expressions of his children, school-bred though they all, and college-bred though some of them, had been. Let the parent, then, be a pattern in this respect. As he dislikes affectation, and would preserve his children from it, let him cultivate simplicity of speech, and utter himself only in the unadulterated tongue of his native land. To protect his children against vulgarisms in conversation, let him not rely upon books and teachers alone, nor yet upon cultivated society abroad, — important

as all these are in their places, — let him depend mainly on the steady influence of the pure language of father and mother, brothers and sisters, at the fireside.

A sense of our own defects and incapacities as guides and models sometimes oppresses us. But it is a merciful appointment of Providence, that, beneath the pressure of parental anxieties, the father usually cherishes the hope, that in the end his son will supply his own deficiencies, and, though he should fail for a time, yet at last will become better than himself. Amid the shifting prospects of the future, the heavens, he trusts, will at length settle, the clouds roll off, and the bright sun shine steadily on. If it is not so with us, if we find gloom and despondency, for any cause whatever, coming upon us as parents, let them not abide in our hearts. It is the part both of wisdom and piety, as on all other subjects, so on this of the welfare of our children, to trust in God. Doubt and fear, in their excess, always enfeeble the spirit, and disqualify us for the work in hand. The father and mother are unfitted by them for a patient and persevering culture. They thus tend to fulfil that dark prophecy in which we sometimes morbidly indulge ourselves. "Hope on, hope ever," should be the motto of the parent.

Even though we can see little promise at this moment in our children, yet let us not forget that they are still young, and susceptible of improvement. Often we see a change come over the character of a child where it was least anticipated. The reckless

one becomes thoughtful, the idle one industrious; the sensual turns to spiritual things; the mind unfolds, and the whole character is consolidated; and it is now stable, progressive, instinct with a new force and a new life. Never, indeed, does a human being sink so low that he cannot still rise. To the latest hour, then, let the anguished heart which sees a dear child gone astray hope and pray and strive for his return to virtue and peace, and remember that, in the high dealings of our benignant Father, "all things are possible."

The lot we stand in, let us look at either or all of our children, must, it is true, be one of greater or less apprehensions. From the birth of these young beings up to this present hour, we have held their destiny in our hands; to us their immortal well-being has been intrusted. And so it will be in all coming time. Whether we dread and would shun, or whether we welcome the office, we must continue to hold it. How shall it be filled? Here is a father; what will he say and do for his children? He must train them to something. Will he by word and by deed educate them in the love of God, in purity of heart, in righteousness, temperance, charity, and the love of their whole race? Or will he breathe over their tender spirits the moral poison of worldliness and irreligion, of servitude to appetite and self and sin? That mother, will she bless her babe in its cradle? Will her face beam with piety, and the little one through her drink into the gentleness and

fidelity, the meekness and self-sacrifice, of Christ? Will husband and wife talk to each other of the character of these their children, and hand in hand unite in training them up for usefulness and honor? What issues are connected with the replies to these few questions!

No wise parent can bring such issues before his mind without at once saying within himself, Are such destinies committed to my hands? Then will I give myself now, while the years are rushing by, and before the opportunity be lost, even *now*, to implanting good principles and forming good habits in my children. Let me do this, and then the time will surely come, when youth and passion are over, in which they will give thanks that my commands were ever upon them, and that both by precept and example I guided them aright. Then, if not before, my reward is sure. Yes, even though for a time my efforts should seem to fail, yet at last, when they come to feel the need of power to resist the temptations and to bear the trials of life, they will rejoice that parental fidelity was not sacrificed to a misguided indulgence. And when I have gone to my rest, they will prize the precious inheritance I left them; and for evermore they will venerate the image and bless the memory of that anxious being who prayerfully and devotedly trained them up in that good way from which they have never been left by their Divine Parent to depart.

Impressed with these and similar considerations,

and led by conviction no less than instinct, what true parent does not live more and more in and for his children? The father may be an unbeliever; but he finds no support in temptation, and no comfort in trouble, from his unbelief, and he loves his son too well to see him follow in his own steps. He desires him to believe in God and Christ and heaven, and to live according to his faith. How little does the good parent think or care for anything personal to himself, compared with his interest in the condition of his children! Let them be well provided for, let them be in good situations, and all doing well, approved by their employers, or successful in their studies, and let their characters be daily improving, he asks no more. He must decrease; happy is he if they meantime increase.

The true mother is absorbed in her children. She gives up the apparel she desires, that they may be better clad; she takes the plain food, and gives them the choicer; she foregoes society, many a privilege, many a comfort and pleasure, for their sakes alone. If her daughters are coming forward with promise, their minds well cultivated, their dispositions gentle and bland, full of love to others and of disinterested acts, then, it matters little what is her own lot, she is content. And if the Father visits with severe sickness her who has a circle of helpless ones leaning upon her, and her case at length becomes critical, we hear her breathe the low prayer, —"For myself, O Father, I am resigned to thy

will, and ready to depart; but, for the sake of my poor children, I could wish to be spared." So is it that of the parent we may say emphatically, Whether he live, or whether he die, it is not unto himself.

And now, what should be the supreme anxiety of the parent? He may feel solicitous in regard to the life and health of his children; their worldly condition may occupy many of his thoughts. His spirit may, and sometimes must, be troubled as he thinks of their present and future characters, and their standing in society. But his supreme anxiety should be *that he may do his own duty* in regard to them. "For their sakes," he should say, "I will sanctify myself." If I can only be what I ought to be as a moral and religious being, and if I can but do for them all I am bound to do as their parent, I may leave the rest in the hands of their Divine Parent. Be this, then, our great care, our chief study and labor.

Father, mother, you are daily engraving a plate whose impressions these little ones will take for the untold ages that lie before them. You are writing a record, not only for yourself, but for these children, each of which is a second self. Then

"Guard thy heart's album. Of its slightest trace
Who knoweth the full import? It may help
To fashion motive, and to color fate;
Nor canst thou tell how strong a thread it weaves
Into the web of deathless destiny,
Till at that solemn audit thou dost stand
Where deed and thought shall find their perfect weight,
And just reward."

CHAPTER XXIV.

EDUCATE JOINTLY FOR BOTH WORLDS.

We are accustomed, in considering the welfare of our children, to separate too much in our thoughts the present from the future world. We esteem one mode of education as suited to qualify them for business and action in this life, and another as demanded in the preparation for the life to come.

But is there indeed a great gulf that thus divides the two worlds? The New Testament teaches us otherwise; our Saviour constantly united the mortal and the immortal, earth and heaven. "I am the resurrection and the life," said he, "and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die." How intimate must be the connection between the present and the future life, if this language be true! The employment of the saints above must be, not a new, untried, and inconceivable work, but the continuance and perfection of what they commenced below. That child who is being well trained for the labors and duties of this world, is receiving the best possible education for the world of spirits. If we would

have the branches outspread and loaded with fruit in the celestial garden, the tree must be reared amid the nurseries of earth.

To educate for both worlds, we must give the body its due care, no less than the spirit. It is not enough to set before ourselves exclusively the training a child's soul for heaven; nor yet to give him a good intellectual and moral preparation for earth. These things are the end, but they do not include all the means, of education. Those embrace the care of the physical, as much as they do that of the spiritual nature.

The more perfect, indeed, the mental and moral education we propose to give our children, the greater is the demand for the preservation and improvement of their physical system. As your daughter advances from one grade of schools to another, instead of diminishing her amount of healthful exercise, as is so often done, she should increase it. If her mind is unusually interested in any subject whatever, be it sacred or secular, now is the time to watch well her health. The principle on which this new care is required is simply this, — that *we must always keep up the balance between the action of our nervous and our muscular energies.* If the mind for any reason is severely tasked, the body must have an extraordinary amount of exercise. To disregard this rule in the child, when the brain is, as we know, peculiarly tried by study, is fatal to his future well-being.

Nor is this all. If you aim only to give your child the best possible mental or spiritual education, you cannot do this except his health be good. How can he study to advantage under the burden of a nervous headache, or the depression of dyspepsy? What progress can your daughter make in her school tasks, while a spinal pain and distortion are daily growing upon her? Little can she accomplish under that lassitude which proceeds from the neglect of bodily exercise. It is equally difficult at any period of life to possess cheerful and true views of religion and heaven and duty, while borne down by some insidious disease.

For the sake, then, of the mind and the soul, for the interests both of time and eternity, we should guard well a child's physical nature. Let there be walks in the open air, the use of the dumb-bells to expand and strengthen the chest, and liberal exercise for every part of the body. The diet should be plain, but abundant, and let us never stint the access of our children to cold water. If they are accustomed to that alone as a beverage, they will desire no other. Tea and coffee, those subtile poisons to many constitutions, will never tempt them as they do most of us; they will drink of choice that pure element provided so liberally by our beneficent Creator. Let them early learn the external use of water; every child should bathe daily in water, cold or tepid, according to the season. As a purifier of the

skin, and as a tonic to the whole system, its value can hardly be exaggerated. "Cleanliness is next to godliness"; physical and mental purity usually go hand in hand. See, also, that your child has pure air in the room where he studies, and in the chamber where he sleeps. Many a fever might be traced to the foul atmosphere of our sleeping-apartments. The *Christian* parent will pardon my going thus far into a subject, whose moral and religious aspects are hardly less important than those exclusively physical. We should glorify God in our bodies no less than our spirits.

It is of vital importance to a sound education of our children, that they should be taught on one all-comprehensive plan. It should be a plan not contracted to this life alone, nor yet to the future life alone. Nor, again, must we think to form the young only for manhood and its active, responsible stations. They are first to be children; and it is to make them better children that our great aim and endeavours should tend.

If we seek to prepare a child for heaven alone, and not for earth also, we wrong an essential part of his nature. It is not merely for conversion to God, a single, insulated event, that we were placed in this world. Conversion is indeed needful for the sinner; but to turn from our sins at some one moment of life is not the whole, nor the chief, purpose of our being. No, man was made for the formation of char-

acter, to reach, through trial and temptation, a state of holiness and perfection. Whatever plans of education stop short of this great object are to be discountenanced, as inadequate to the demands of human nature. Whatever, on the other hand, leads upward and onward, a life of progress, be it through childhood or maturity, through life or death, in heaven or on earth, — every such course, and all such influences, should be welcomed by the parent. The only true and living faith is that which

> " elevates the just
> Before and when they die ;
> And makes each soul a separate heaven,
> A court of Deity."

The language just quoted is indeed poetry, but it is also truth. Why, but to join the two worlds, did Jesus Christ take little children in his arms, and say, " Of such is the kingdom of heaven " ? If we are to believe him, our work with the young is to retain their infantile purity, and to retrace those sacred lines which the world so soon and so sadly effaces from their hearts. We must labor, not to separate, but to keep together, what God hath joined in them, — childhood and youth, the young with the old man, time with eternity.

There seems to be a prevalent misapprehension on this subject. I once heard an intelligent individual and an exemplary Christian remark of a candidate for the ministry who had died in the morning of

his life, "What a pity that so much time and expense have been bestowed on his education!" As if intellectual instruction and moral culture could ever be wasted on an immortal being! If we believe the soul lives on for ever, and starts in the future life where it ended its course here, why should we lament having given a son a liberal education, even though he was at once removed by death? Nothing, nothing whatever, that is pure, and elevating, and expansive in its influence, can be lost on the undying spirit. Everything which prepares one for honorable success and true usefulness on earth is a part of that infinite training which stretches through eternity.

Let me not be thought to say, that an education intended merely for this world includes all that is needful for human salvation. This is my view: — I would connect by indissoluble bonds the entire experience of man and the whole circle of his duties. There should be no high wall of which it could be said, on this side all is good, and on that side all is evil, while both, it is said in the same breath, must be recognized as parts of education. The true system of training embraces, on the contrary, broad principles, covering all periods of life, and every part of the character.

Teach the child, first, to love his Father in heaven. Teach him next, nay, if he feel habitually this holy affection, he will be self-taught, to "do all

things to the glory of God." That disposition will sanctify whatever occupies his mind or his hands. It will make study and recreation, labor and rest, alike acceptable to Him whose laws extend over every hour of our lives, and every act, word, and thought.

Instruct your child to reverence and obey his conscience, and let him make everything in which right and wrong are involved — however insignificant others may regard this or that particular act — a concern of conscience. Lead him to form all his opinions on the broadest ground he can take, and in conformity to everlasting truth. Do all you can to give him elevated and enlarged associations with his domestic relations. Connect as many ties as possible with the world of spirits. Has he lost some dear relative or interesting companion? Point him to the departed one as still living, as being now and having been always joined to him by spiritual bonds. Do not leave his imagination to dwell on the body, but direct it to the soul. Speak of the lost one as looking down upon him from his new home with an unquenchable love, and desiring nothing so much as that he may be pure and good enough to join him in his pleasant abode.

To unite the two worlds closely, we should place our children under those holiest of teachers, the dead. How would they be redeemed from evil, how, indeed, kept for ever from its paths, could

they be impressed with an abiding belief that the father, the mother, the brother or sister, they had lost, was in no important sense dead, but rather enjoying a truer life! Death so associated, instead of being "the king of terrors," would be to them a messenger of love. The early called would seem to them intrusted with new privileges, elevated to the high office of watching round their path below, and waiting to accompany them at last up to their dear Father in heaven.

But it is no light task to render these views familiar and operative in the minds of the young. If we would have all events and influences combine to this end, we must inculcate and reiterate in their hearing, and by our own conduct also, that truth which Jesus laid as the corner-stone of his religion, that "the kingdom of God is *within*" us. It must be imbedded in the child's heart, that his good or ill for every stage of his existence will depend on his inward condition. Nothing is more difficult than to make a child realize this; he believes, and clings with determination to the belief, that, if he can only gain all he desires of outward possessions, he shall want no more. All his troubles, he is sure, proceed from abroad. He will break his toy, charging that with being the cause of those sufferings which spring only from his own uncontrolled passions.

Now, we can do little on the plan just proposed, until we have first eradicated these false ideas of the

source of happiness. A child must be convinced, by some means, that, if he is happy, the secret of it lies in his own breast; let him see distinctly that nothing whatever can satisfy an unhappy disposition. When he is peevish, impatient, dissatisfied with every person and every thing about him, turn his thoughts in to the fountain of his disquietude, make all his experience reveal himself to himself, and convince him, as you thus can, that to cultivate peace within is to bring heaven down to earth.

I cannot forbear adverting once more to the importance of inspiring the young with a habit of self-culture and self-trust, from its bearings both on their temporal and spiritual good. Many children grow up leaning on their family connections. They think it enough for them that their father has wealth, or intellect, or office. This is to be their passport through life; wherever it is known from what family they come, they will be sure of honor and success. They are proud of their name, perhaps puffed up by their ancestry. But how vain is every such dependence! Under monarchical governments a family name and rank and titles secure favor and success; but in this land they avail, at most, very little.

Every boy should be taught that he must have a root in himself, that he must work with his own hands or his own brain, and determine, under God, by his personal efforts, what he will be. In his spiritual condition and destiny, your child must stand

alone. He is a responsible being, to answer for himself at the bar of Heaven. Your piety will not be transferred to his account; he cannot pass, on the strength of your character, the fearful ordeals of the present and the future. Why, then, let him think to make a pillar of you in his secular affairs? Better you were the poorest of the poor, so that he knew he could not depend on you for the least pecuniary support, than that he trust in your wealth, and grow up feeble in mind and body, a mere shadow of yourself. Help him liberally, but only on condition that he will also help himself. Teach him that he must be a moral architect, build his own fortune, start where you did, work as you have, and be himself a master in business, qualified to be the independent head of a new and honored family.

In approaching the conclusion of this volume, I will say a few words in reply to an objection to its views and plans which has occurred, undoubtedly, to many parents as they have read its several chapters. "How can we possibly find *time* to do so much personally for the education of our children as you would require? We must provide for the outward wants of our family; and to do this we must labor constantly in the workshop, on the soil, in the counting-room, or wherever our occupation calls us. We must have," says the mother, "proper food and [illegible] children, and suitable furniture and [illegible]liness in all the apartments of our

house. These things we *must* secure, and when we have done that, we find we have little time left to attend to the minds and morals and manners of our children."

Alas! here are the shoals and rocks on which we wreck our vessel. We invert the order of Providence; we place that last which God ranks first. According to his arrangement, home is to be a means, but never the end, of life. Its duties were intended, not to overlay and stifle the inner man, but to call forth its powers, to perfect it in virtue, to qualify it for heaven. It was not intended that we should sacrifice the spirit to the body; both the outward and the inward have a rightful place; the two worlds were to meet at the fireside.

I do not believe that our duties ever come into an unavoidable conflict. We have time for all that is required of us. We can do everything necessary for the subsistence and comfort of our families, and still form in ourselves and our children the Christian character. Were this, however, untrue, did exigencies arise in which either the outward or the inward must suffer from want or neglect, no sane mind can doubt which should have the first place in our care. If cases do actually arise in which we must neglect either the body or the soul of a child, the gratification of his palate or the training of his mind, his clothing or his character, I think no conscientious parent will hesitate which to choose. He will

say within himself, "Plain bread and water from the spring shall be on our table, and the coarsest raiment in our wardrobe, if I can provide nothing better without being knowingly unfaithful to the moral and spiritual improvement of my children."

Some things, indeed, in regard to our children, we may neglect with impunity. We are anxious to lay up property for their sakes; and if we can do it without detriment to their characters, let it be done. But we can leave this undone, and, in the providence of God, it may prove in the end better for them than the largest estate. It may impress on them the need of self-dependence, and compel them to work with their own hands, and thus form habits of industry, economy, and temperance. We desire, perhaps, to raise them in the social scale, and to bring them into the circle of the rich, the learned, and the distinguished. We have ambitious views in regard to their occupation and their elevation to places of honor and trust. But what though we fail in all these aspirations? We have lost only what pertains to earth and to the perishable man. But, ah! if we fail to provide for their immortal interests and their spiritual elevation, — if, either to indulge them or to spare ourselves labor, we leave their minds all barren of divine knowledge, and their hearts frivolous or worldly, — if we permit ease or pride or lust to canker their souls, — then, so far as they are concerned, we have sacrificed the gold for

the sake of the dross. We have not only prepared a bitter cup for our own lips, but have laid up a fortune for them that will turn into ashes.

I have thus far admitted that the right education of a child costs his parent more labor and hardship than it would to leave him to himself. But I will now say, — and observation and experience confirm the position, — that, taking the whole period of the child's pupilage into the account, it costs less labor and hardship to train him up in the right than in the wrong way.

Obedience has been set forth prominently throughout this volume, as a pillar in the temple of education. But who has not seen that those children who obey their parents implicitly are managed with far more ease than those who constantly resist parental authority? It requires, I admit, some decision and energy to establish one's authority firmly over a child; it cannot be done with most children, except by persevering labor. But when it is done once, it is done for ever. Then blows are not needed, nor are many words, to secure uniform obedience and all the blessed results that flow from it.

Take, on the other hand, a child who has never yielded to the command of his parent, *as* a command, and what is more difficult than to educate him aright? The mother will talk incessantly to her intractable little boy; she will now coax him, and now pursue him with scoldings; she will try to hire

him by cakes and toys to do what she wishes ; she threatens to punish him ; she holds up the authority of the father in terror before him ; she tells him what trouble he gives her, and appeals alternately to his hopes and his fears, to his gratitude and his sense of respect. By every device and plan and effort she labors, until often she is exhausted and discouraged, to induce him to a commendable deportment. And after all she fails ; he grows up disrespectful, selfish, indolent, the very reverse of what her heart desires. She permits her daughter, until she becomes a young woman, to cling to her pillow in the morning, not having the energy to arouse her at the proper hour. By a little effort, comparatively, she might have made her an early riser. But now she is a slave to this child. She must be summoned again and again, every motive appealed to, method after method tried, to induce her to rise. And all without success ; " A little more sleep, a little more slumber," is the daily reply to her calls. The patience of the mother is wearied out ; the whole family must wait for the over-indulged daughter, or the table stand hours for her convenience, and the domestic arrangements of the entire morning be disturbed by her slothfulness.

Now all this labor and trouble would have been spared by securing in the infancy of her children a habit of obedience. That done, a word, a look even, would have usually sufficed to control them.

The first steps taken right, all the rest had been comparatively easy. For the sake, then, of economy, to save time and save labor, we should do our work with a child faithfully. If we teach him all we think he ought to be taught, train him as our conscience dictates, require of him prompt obedience, and lead him to self-government from the very cradle, we shall spare ourselves untold labors and anxieties, and at the same time lay a good foundation for him in this world and the world to come.

Let us now settle well in our minds the great purpose of this life, — intellectual advancement and moral and religious progress. Never may we forget that, by the appointment of God, they are to be made one, inseparably and for ever. Life and death, — united by Him, let them not be disjoined by us in our efforts to educate the young. Christ calls to his arms the lambs which our Father hath given us. Why should we, by our remissness, forbid them to approach him? What better can we do for them, either in a temporal or a spiritual regard, than to commit them to his charge? As we would prepare them for a secular avocation, and should consider it a culpable negligence not to do this, so let us train them for their heavenly calling. God has done his part nobly in the nature he has given them; he places a crown of glory on the brow of each of our children at its birth. But they need cherubims and a flaming sword turning every way to keep for

them the tree of life. Blessed are we if He commit this office to us and we fill it with fidelity. Happy shall we be if, when they go forth from our charge, whether it be to the cares and toils of this eventful world, or, among the early called, go up to a home in unseen and spiritual mansions, we can give them up with the consciousness of having done, not what we desired, but what we could, to fit them for the future. And then, whether on that high course they precede or follow us, sustained by this inward testimony we can endure calmly the final parting; —

"If orphans they are left behind,
God's guardian care we trust;
That care shall heal our bleeding hearts,
If weeping o'er their dust."

THE END.